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THE BEACON HANDICRAFT SERIES

LEATHERCRAFT for AMATEURS

BY

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Issued in co-operation with the Fellowcrafters Guild,
affiliate of Boston University



ILLUSTRATIONS BY
CHARLES E. WHITE, JR.

1946

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FOREWORD

IN the bewildering cross currents that have engulfed modern life in rapid changes, it has become increasingly evident to educators and others engaged in character training that an inevitable effect has been a paternalistic tendency to regiment the habits and even the very thoughts of both children and adults. This has forced growing life into restrictive channels by prescribed patterns, so that the constructive efforts of education have been frustrated and qualities of individual initiative and self-reliance have been alarmingly submerged.

Boston University, together with other institutions of higher learning, has recognized the seriousness of the problem. It has given careful study to the means of meeting the situation and, in 1930, decided that an opportunity should be offered to its students and to teachers and social workers of surrounding towns to learn a selected number of creative handicrafts so that they might have this means of stimulating self-expression in the daily lives of children and adults.

The response was immediate and enthusiastic so that these courses have been regularly included in the educational and social science curriculum. Instruction in the different crafts is given by the teachers of the Fellow-crafters Guild, an institution of acknowledged leadership in this field, which has now been affiliated with Boston University.

FOREWORD

Numerous requests, however, have been received for craft instruction from persons in distant places and others unable to attend the classes. The Beacon Press has generously agreed to join in this social experiment by publishing a series of inexpensive, elementary books, which will give to people remote from Boston exactly the same step-by-step instruction as is afforded to the class students.

Boston University shares with the publishers the hope that *The Beacon Handicraft Series* will afford its readers a satisfying means of self-expression through creative work.

HENRY H. MEYER, Ph.D., Th.D.,
*Dean of Boston University
School of Social Service.*

PREFACE

THE revival of interest in handicrafts has been a natural reaction from the technically perfect but impersonal products of highly developed machinery and it will, it is believed, prove of real benefit in providing an enjoyable and constructive means for employing increased hours of leisure.

Of the various handicrafts, leatherwork holds forth special claims upon the interest of an ambitious worker because of the simplicity of the processes, the inexpensiveness of the equipment, and the practically noiseless and therefore non-irritating nature of the work. Yet leathercraft affords, at the same time, an outlet for individuality and artistic expression in developing articles of beauty and of enduring value.

This brief manual has been prepared with the object of serving especially those who have had no instruction or experience in leatherwork. An effort has been made, therefore, to present the directions very fully and clearly, even sometimes at the expense of repetition and seeming redundancy of expression.

The author gratefully acknowledges her indebtedness to Constantine Belash, President of Fellowcrafters, Inc., for his interest and helpful suggestions, to Helener G. Robertson for revising and editing the manuscript, to Helen E. Cleaves, Director of Art in the Boston Public Schools, for her invaluable advice about the designs, and to Lillian Cobin, who originated some of the illustrations.

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CHAPTER I

LEATHERS FOR LEATHERCRAFT

THE art of leathercraft has always presented an intrinsic appeal to creative minds and has often been developed to stages of artistic perfection and great beauty so that many masterpieces are now exhibited among the treasures in various museums. There is a fascination in the soft, pliable leather itself and one is further intrigued by the almost countless uses for which it is adapted. Even undecorated, leather has great alluring beauty, but its real charm grows the more one handles the smooth surface and sees it take on new character with the imprint of simple or more elaborate decoration.

The pleasure derived is greatly enhanced if the worker, even in the elementary stages, will try to express his own individuality and create original designs. One need only turn to nature for an inexhaustible source of suggestions and inspiration. But a beginner especially should restrain himself from the natural impulse to attempt elaborate or complicated patterns. A very simple design well done will produce a charming effect. Later, as the worker becomes more acquainted with the action of the different kinds of leather and more skilled in the use of the various tools, he can progress with confidence to the most intricate work.

Many kinds of leather can be used in different forms of leathercraft, but for tooled work it is necessary that

the leather has been bark-tanned; otherwise it cannot be dampened and the tooling will leave no impression. When leather is purchased, therefore, the purpose for which it is to be used should be definitely stated.

One should be very particular to select skins which are firm, but supple, of even coloring, and as free as possible from defects and weak spots. Unfinished leather should never be exposed for any length of time to sun and air, but should be kept loosely rolled with the right side out; rolling the right side inward will cause wrinkles, which cannot be smoothed out. Great care should also be exercised in the handling of leather, which is very sensitive to pressure and scratches. These accidental marks can never be removed and will show through tooling, staining, or any other finish. No sharp or rough objects, therefore, such as rings, cuff buttons, bracelets, or even the finger nails, should be allowed to mar the surface.

Whole, half, or quarter hides of leather, as shown in Plate I, can be bought from any supply house. Smaller pieces by the square foot will be cut, if desired, but this is a more expensive way of purchasing. For general pur-

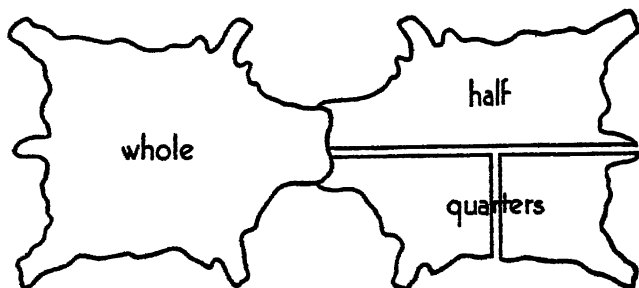


PLATE I

poses, a half hide will be found a very adaptable size, especially if it is a part of a broad hide, which can be cut with less waste than one of long and narrow proportions. One should mark on the back of the leather all the defects where they appear on the right side and examine particularly for thin, weak places, indicating them also. Then he should lay out, on the back of the skin, paper patterns of articles to be made and plan very carefully the most economical way of cutting. The best section of the leather is that near the center of the hide and this part should be chosen for the most particular work. The direction or grain of the leather is not important in leathercraft, and care in planning will prevent needless extravagant waste.

Bundles of scrap leather, consisting of small pieces of various kinds, are sold by the pound. Sometimes such bundles are useful for beginners to procure in order to practice the various processes of leathercraft described in the following chapters before undertaking an entire project. Pieces large enough to be made into small articles or to be joined together for various uses are often included. Occasionally, however, the bundles contain only small scraps of very little value and the purchase cannot, therefore, be unqualifiedly recommended to those who have to order by mail.

Of the numerous varieties of leather available, the following kinds are the most generally used for leathercraft work:

Tooling calf, as the name indicates, is especially prepared for modelling. Its surface is firm, but supple, and it is obtainable in different thicknesses. In the natural color, it is very beautiful and the tooling gives it rich brown shades. It is well adapted to stains and different

paints and dyes. Calf can also be procured commercially-colored; in this state it can be used for flat-tooling but it is not satisfactory for embossing or incising.

Russet tooling steerhide has almost the same characteristics as tooling calf, but is of a heavier quality. The dull skins are especially prepared for staining. Steerhide, like natural-colored tooling calf, is suitable for all kinds of leather tooling, steerhide being superior for incised work.

Goatskin, tanned usually with sumac, produces a very fine leather called morocco, the best quality now being the levant morocco. This leather is not suitable for embossing or incising, but it can be used for blind-tooling and, in the better qualities, for flat-tooling. It takes dyes and paints very beautifully.

Sheepskin is inexpensive and useful for beginners, but it is not recommended for fine work, as it is inclined to be loose in texture and easily stretched. The better grades of sheepskin can be flat-tooled with fairly satisfactory results.

Suede, which is lambskin tanned or shaved so as to leave an undressed surface, can be procured in many beautiful colors. It cannot be tooled, but it is easily stitched on an ordinary sewing machine and different colors are frequently thus combined in bright, variegated effects. Suede can also be decorated by stencil or cut-out work.

Skiver is the name applied to a very thin leather obtained by splitting sheepskin by machinery. It comes in various colors and is used chiefly for linings and for covering boxes.

Pigskin is of too tight texture for any kind of tooled work, but it can be decorated with dark brown lines pro-

duced by the hot point of a pyrographic pen. Since definite instructions for use are furnished with the pyrographic pen outfit, they are not included in this book. The strength of pigskin makes it suitable for bookbindings, bags, purses, and other articles intended for hard usage.

Crocodile, Lizard, and some *Fishskins* can be made into various articles. These leathers cannot be tooled, but they are decorative in themselves, and, in fact, are often appliquéd as ornamental units on other leathers.

Lacing, or thonging, used for joining parts of articles together, is usually cut from goatskin or thin calfskin. It can be bought by the yard in different shades and thicknesses, or, if preferred, it may be cut out of the same leather as the article for which it is to be used.

CHAPTER II

TOOLS AND GENERAL DIRECTIONS

THE inexpensiveness and simpleness of the equipment required in leatherwork is an important consideration for those who are interested in handicrafts, but do not wish to invest in an elaborate and costly outlay. One can begin with very few tools and add others later as his interest develops and his proficiency increases. This is, in fact, really the best method, for when one has acquired a familiarity with the action of the leather, he can best judge for himself the tool adapted to his individual use for any particular purpose, but, as leather is extremely sensitive to treatment, the quality of the tools used is a very important factor for obtaining satisfactory results.

A solid working surface is needed and for this nothing is better than a marble slab placed on a rather low, steady bench or table. The marble not only affords a perfectly smooth, firm surface for leather tooling, but its coolness retards the drying of the dampened leather. A piece of old marble can usually be found in an attic or it can be purchased at a very small cost from a dealer in second-hand furniture or in used building materials.

The cutting of the leather should be done on stiff cardboard or linoleum, as one can thus be sure of cutting right through the leather and giving the work a neat, clean edge. A wooden surface is not suitable to use, because the grain of the wood is very liable to deflect the knife

and may even turn it at a sharp angle and cause it to cut sidewise into the leather. The sheet of cardboard (or linoleum) should be larger than the area of the leather to be cut and should be placed on a secure surface. It should be discarded after being used a number of times, as every line to be cut should have a fresh space of the cardboard beneath it.

Leather is always tooled when damp, but not wet, and the impressions made will remain when the leather dries. For dampening the leather a piece of cheesecloth or a soft sponge dipped in cold water is most frequently used, though some leathercrafters prefer a small, soft brush. The piece of leather to be tooled is dampened on both sides and then a second time on the wrong, or flesh side. Whether the design to be tooled covers the whole surface or only a part, it is important to remember that the entire surface must be dampened, as wetting in spots causes unsightly stains and discolorations when the leather has dried. Some leathercrafters soak the leather thoroughly first and allow it to dry to the point where it is ready for tooling. This method, however, presents no advantage and is liable to result both in stretching the leather out of shape and also in one's starting the tooling before the leather is sufficiently dry. The leather positively must not be worked when wet; it should be just damp. It is too wet if any sign of moisture oozes from it when it is pressed with the modelling tool. Tooling leather when it is soggy will stretch or even tear the surface and will result in shallow, ill-defined impressions. A beginner should practice on a small piece of leather until he understands just the degree of dampness required.

The article to be made must first be cut, according to a paper pattern, from the piece of leather. A pair of

scissors or shears may be used satisfactorily for cutting suede and other soft leathers, but not the heavier leathers. The squeezing of heavy leather between the blades of the shears and the forward pressure required will produce edges that are white in places, uneven, and sometimes irremediably stretched. For cutting all heavy leathers, therefore, a very sharp knife should be used. The style of knife recommended is illustrated in Figure A of Plate II and the blade must be of steel of good quality. In cut-

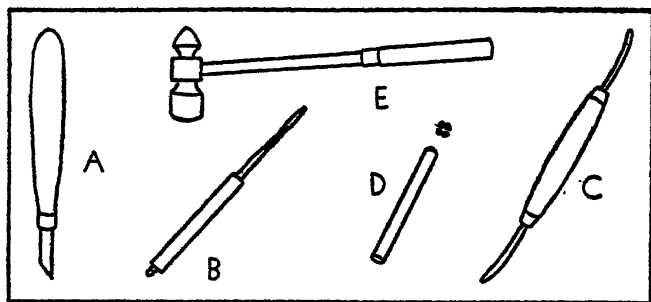


PLATE II

ting, the knife should be held nearly perpendicular and absolutely at right angles to the leather surface. Do not allow it to slant even slightly to the right or left and draw it forward with slow, firm pressure, bearing through until you feel it cutting the cardboard or linoleum surface underneath. For straight edges it is best to use a metal ruler as a guide. Never pull or twitch a place where the leather has not been cut entirely through, as is sometimes likely to happen, especially at corners. Be patient; insert the knife in the line again and go over the uncut place with a heavier pressure. Very much of the attractiveness

of the finished article depends on the neatness and accuracy of the cutting. This same knife is used for cutting the leather in "incised work," which will be explained in a later chapter. (See p. 29.)

For tracing the cutting pattern of the article on the back of the leather, a black or other colored pencil or a pen is used. For tracing the outline of the design through the tracing paper onto the dampened surface of the leather, the tracer, illustrated in Figure B, is a very convenient tool. It is not, however, essential, for any hard, smooth, dull point, as a fairly hard pencil, a bone stylus (or style), a knitting needle, or any similar object, will serve just as well.

Tooling of leather, which is also called flat-tooling or modelling, is done with the steel modelling tool shown in Figure C. There are several types, but the shape of the modeller, with one end a little broader than the other, is practically the same in all styles. Some have shanks bound with cord, while others have casings of wood or rubber. The choice is one of individual preference, the object being to select a tool which can be comfortably but firmly held in the hand. Sometimes the tools will be found to have edges which are somewhat rough when purchased or they may become sharp through use. As the slightest roughness will cause scratchy lines on the leather, such a tool should be rubbed lightly on emery paper or fine oilstone and polished on a piece of oiled leather until it is perfectly smooth.

Since modelling is the fundamental operation of all leather tooling, detailed directions for the process are reserved for special treatment in a later chapter. (See page 21.)

In order to make a design on the leather stand out

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more prominently and to add to the attractive appearance of the work, it is often desirable to depress the spaces within the design or the background around the outline. For this work, various metal or wooden background tools, or "stamps," as they are called, can be purchased, but usually a very simple unit is best, for it should not detract from the interest of the design. A very satisfactory stamp for such work can be made by filing down the point of a nail until it is smoothly rounded. The background stamp is held steady, but not gripped tightly, in the left hand and hit rather lightly with a small hammer held in the right hand, as shown in Plate III. This process is called "hammering" the background.

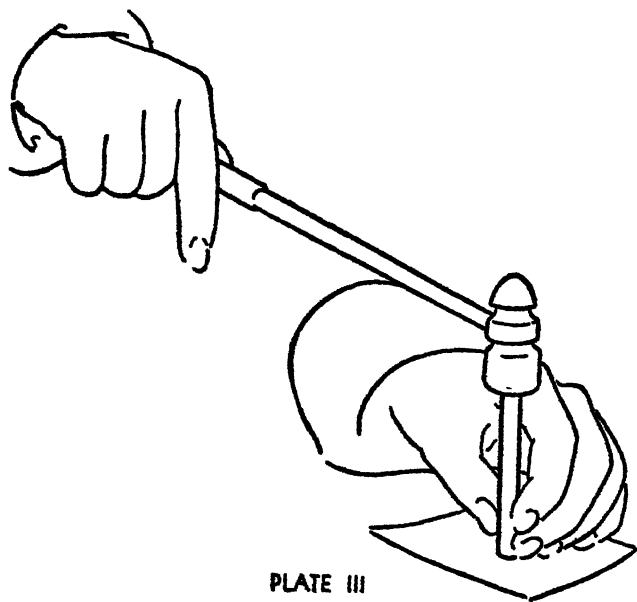


PLATE III

The type of hammer recommended is illustrated in Figure E of Plate II. One should be selected that feels comfortable to hold and it should be not be so heavy as to tire the hand when used continuously for a large space of background work. A small wooden mallet may, if preferred, be used instead of the hammer.

Background stamps of various designs, struck with the hammer in the manner just described, are often used in themselves for the principal decorative effect or for an ornamental border. This is called "blind tooling," and is treated more fully in Chapter VI. One of the almost infinite variety of these stamps is shown in Figure D of Plate II.

The tools described in the preceding paragraphs constitute all the equipment required for the usual processes of leather tooling. Other tools needed for making the perforations in leather surfaces which are to be joined by hand-stitching or lacing and tools used in making up articles will be described in the chapters devoted to these subjects. (See Chapters X and XI.)

CHAPTER III

PATTERNS FOR CUTTING LEATHER AND TRACING DESIGNS

Patterns for Cutting

EVEN an experienced worker in leathercraft would not start to cut the leather without having first prepared accurate patterns from any perfectly smooth, firm paper for all the parts of the article to be made. One naturally understands that the cutting patterns should be of the exact dimensions desired for the article, except where it may be necessary to allow for extra length. This caution is very important. If the leather is to be folded in making the article, as in a purse, twice the thickness of the leather must be added to the length of the paper pattern for the leather that will be taken up by the fold; if there is to be a heavy inner lining, or if the pattern is for a book cover, portfolio, or similar article, provision must also be made for the added thickness. On an edge which will be joined to another by stitching or lacing, a margin must be allowed, the width of the margin needed varying from about three-sixteenths of an inch on lighter leathers to about three-eighths of an inch on large articles of heavy leather. If the design which is to be traced on the leather is intricate and fine, or if the surface to be tooled is large and consequently a little awkward to handle, it will be found advisable to provide for securing the design pattern to the right side of the leather by thumb tacks or a little

paste during the tracing. As the marks of paste or tacks cannot be removed, they should not be made within the surface of the article. For such a case, therefore, a margin of half an inch should be allowed on all sides in the cutting pattern. This surplus leather will be trimmed off when the tracing is completed. A margin narrower than half an inch would be sufficient for the purpose, but it would be difficult to cut off neatly afterwards.

When all these cautions have been taken into consideration, the paper pattern is cut. The leather is placed face down on a heavy cardboard or linoleum surface, as suggested on page 8 and the pattern laid on the selected part. (See page 3.) Weights should be used especially at the corners to hold the pattern in place. The outline of the pattern should be very distinctly drawn on the wrong side of the leather with a black or other colored pencil or with pen and ink. The cutting pattern should then be removed and the leather cut according to the directions for cutting already given on page 8.

Design Patterns

The design to be used in decorating leather should be selected with proper consideration of its suitability for the processes to be used and its appropriateness for the article. It may be a copy of another design or, preferably, an original drawing, but it should be refined in character and have real artistic value. Therefore, it should harmonize in shape with the space to be filled; it should be simple but effective, with but one important subject, and the background subordinated; it should have no conflict in the direction of its lines; and the whole should be unified and well balanced. Those who have had no training in the appreciation of design or in working out their own ideas

will find invaluable suggestions in the art museums and in the public libraries.

Whatever the design selected, it should be prepared, in all its detail, exactly as it is desired, and then copied very carefully on tracing paper or tracing linen for transferring it to the leather. Design patterns that have been previously marked over or torn should not be used, as accuracy of outline is absolutely indispensable for fine leatherwork.

The tracing paper or linen for the design should be cut an inch larger all around than the piece of leather on which the design is to be traced. This extra inch is to be folded under the leather on the four sides and clipped with spring paper fasteners or little spring clothespins at the corners. The margin may, if preferred, be pasted to the back of the leather, but along one edge only, as the tracing paper will have to be raised occasionally to examine the tracing. If a half-inch margin has been allowed on the leather, as has been suggested for large articles of heavy leather, the design pattern will be cut the same size as the leather and secured at the corners with thumb tacks or paste.

Adapting a Design to a Space of Different Dimensions

A given design can be readily adapted to a space of larger or smaller dimensions by the use of rectangles cross-sectioned by parallel lines, according to the following process. First draw a rectangle enclosing the design. Test the corners of the rectangle with a T-square, a try-square, or any right angle to make sure that they are right angles, as it is very important that the rectangles should be made accurately. Then draw another rectangle,

also very accurately, of the size of the space which the design is to occupy.

Compare the bases of the two rectangles and select the base which is the smaller. Divide this smaller base by any number of parallel lines drawn perpendicularly from the base to the top of the rectangle. The distances between these parallel lines need not be equal, but the lines must be perpendicular to the base. If so drawn, they will be parallel to each other and to the left and right sides of the rectangle. In the diagrams shown in Plate IV, the base $A^1 B^1$ of rectangle No. 1 is smaller than base $A^2 B^2$ of rectangle No. 2 and is therefore divided as illustrated. Take a strip of paper the exact length of the base $A^2 B^2$ of rectangle No. 2, and lay it diagonally across rectangle No. 1, with the top corner of the left end of the strip, A^2 , just at the lower left corner, A^1 , of the rectangle No. 1. Move the other end of the strip of paper until its top right corner just touches some point on the right side of the rectangle. In this position, mark (or "tick off," as it is called) on the paper the points where the parallel lines already drawn in rectangle No. 1 touch the paper. The strip of paper will then be divided proportionately into exactly the same number of sections as the base of rectangle No. 1. Place the paper back from corner to corner on the base $A^2 B^2$ of rectangle No. 2 and, marking off the same dimensions on the base, draw parallel lines perpendicular to the top.

Turn your rectangles around so that the left side of each is in the position of the base. Proceed again as just described, selecting the shorter of the two new bases. In the illustration, $C^2 A^2$ is shorter than $C^1 A^1$. Therefore divide $C^2 A^2$ by drawing any number of parallel perpendicular lines to the opposite side. Take a strip of

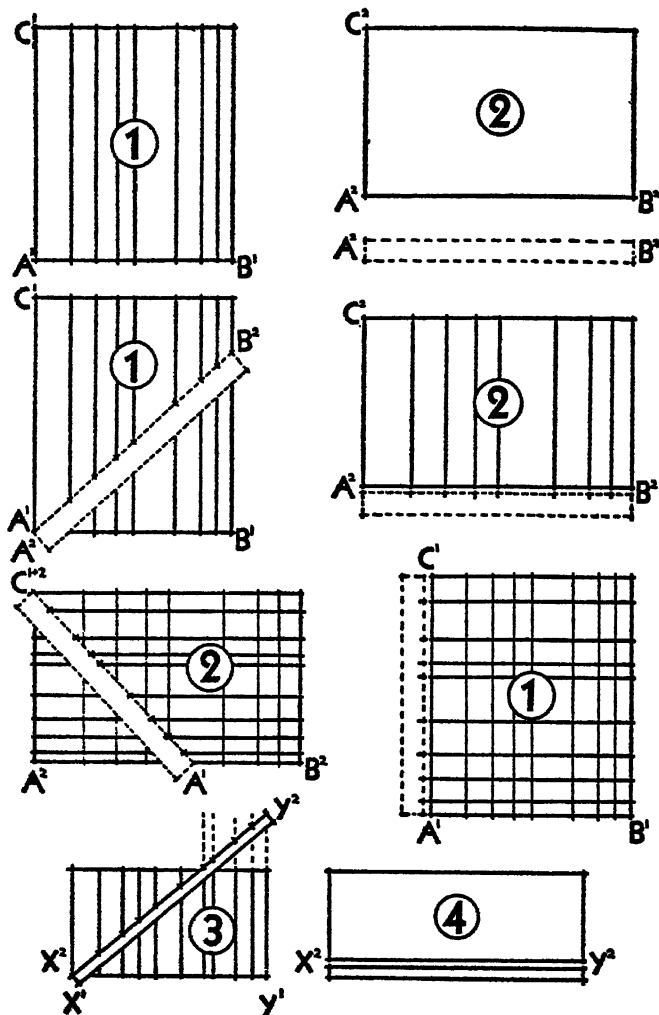


PLATE IV

paper the length of $C^1 A^1$ and lay it diagonally from corner C^2 of rectangle No. 2 until it meets the side $A^2 B^2$ and tick off the points where the parallels perpendicular to $C^2 A^2$ touch it. Place the paper back on the base $C^1 A^1$ and mark off the divisions on the base. At these points draw parallel perpendicular lines to the opposite side.

When one end of the strip of paper measuring the longer base of two rectangles is placed at the lower left corner of the shorter base, the other end of the paper may project beyond the right side of the rectangle, even at the greatest distance, from the lower left corner to the upper right corner. This will happen when the length of the longer base greatly exceeds the length of the shorter, as in rectangles Nos. 3 and 4. In this case, the right side and parallel intersector of the rectangle with the shorter base must be extended, as shown in the illustration of rectangle No. 3, as much as necessary for the right end of the paper to touch a point on the extended right side of the rectangle. Then tick off the points where the original or extended parallel lines touch the paper.

When the parallel lines have been drawn perpendicular to the bases and to the left sides of both rectangles, the rectangles will be divided into exactly the same number of small sections, with each section of the new rectangle proportionate to the corresponding section of the rectangle dividing the design and the design can be easily filled in. Use a light sketch line at first. When the design is completed, go over it with firm, distinct lines and then transfer it onto tracing paper for the design pattern.

The center of the design, if desired, can be located either in the original or in the adapted dimensions by drawing the two diagonals from the opposite corners of

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the rectangle. The point where the diagonals intersect will be the middle of the rectangle and of the design.

Plate V shows a design adapted to various sizes. The

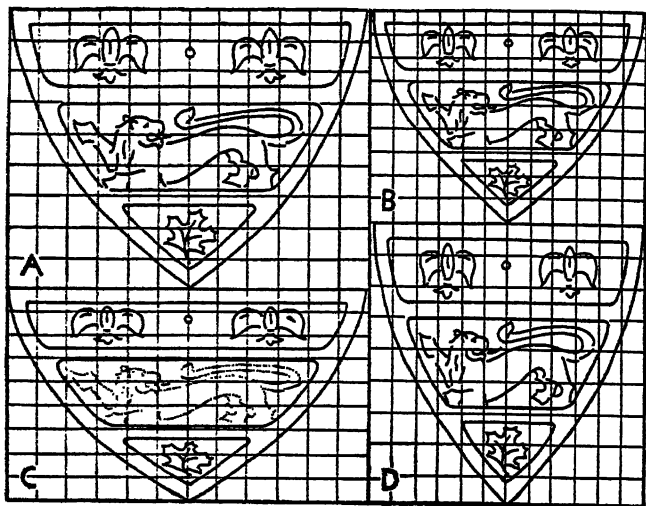


PLATE V

spaces marked off by each set of parallel lines in these drawings are equal, but this equality of division is not necessary, as pointed out in the directions, and would usually be difficult to obtain without the use of a special ruler, such as is used by architects.

Tracing Designs on Leather

The same care should be exercised in making design patterns, whether the design consists merely of simple units for cut-out work, of border lines to enclose blind-

tooling, or of more intricate and elaborate decorations for modelling, incising, and embossing.

The piece of leather on which the design is to be traced is placed face side up on any firm surface, preferably the marble slab, except when thumb tacks are to be used to secure the corners. The working surface in that case should be of wood, like a drawing-board, into which the tacks can be pressed.

All leathers except those which have been bark-tanned must be kept dry. On these the tracing is done like any ordinary tracing work, preferably with a medium hard pencil.

The bark-tanned tooling leathers, calf, steerhide, sheepskin, and goatskin, must be dampened for tracing the design in the same manner as has already been described on page 7 for dampening them for tooling.

The tracing paper with the design on it is then placed on the right side of the leather and secured in whichever manner has been planned. The tracing on these leathers is done with a tracer, a fairly hard pencil, a bone stylus, or any hard dull point entirely free from the slightest roughness which might scratch through the tracing paper and mar the leather. Trace over all the lines of the design with firm, steady pressure. Lift the tracing paper from time to time to see whether the impressions are being made distinctly and also to compare with the design to make sure that no lines are omitted. The need of accuracy in transferring the design cannot be stressed too strongly, as mistakes cannot be corrected. The mere going over a line a second time is likely to give a double impression, which will cause trouble later. It is always advisable, if possible, to complete the tracing of the design at one sitting. If the leather becomes too dry so

that the tracing is faint, the tracing paper must be raised and the leather dampened again, but on the face side only. When the tracing is finished, remove the paper and examine the impression on the leather. If any detail has been omitted, it should be put in while the leather is still damp. If any lines are ill-defined, go over them right on the leather with any tracing tool except a pencil, which must not be used when you are working on the uncovered leather.

If a margin was allowed for securing the design pattern, it should be trimmed off as soon as the tracing is completed.

The pieces of leather for the article are thus cut and imprinted with the design ready for whatever process is to be used for the decoration. Infinite care and attention even to the slightest detail has been constantly urged upon the worker and will be amply rewarded in the superior effects and attractiveness of the finished article.

CHAPTER IV

LEATHER TOOLING

Flat-tooling or Modelling

VERY beautiful effects can be obtained by quite simple processes on calf, steerhide, and the better grades of goatskin and sheepskin, because these leathers, though of varying degrees of thickness, are all smooth and pliant. The surface of the leather stretches very readily when dampened and will take deep impressions or lines of hair-like fineness, which remain with just as distinct definition when the leather has dried. The impressions, furthermore, are of darker tones than the surface, the shade varying with the depth of the impression. With such color gradations possible, very artistic results can be achieved without any further embellishment. This process is known as tooling, flat-tooling, or flat-modelling. The natural-colored skins are the best to use, though commercially dyed tooling leathers can also be flat-tooled satisfactorily.

It is advisable for an inexperienced worker to start with a design which is bold in outline and broad in effect, whether it consists of geometric patterns or of curves and floral figures. Finer work is also possible, especially with calfskin, but such intricate designs should not be attempted until one has become more proficient. By depressing the leather around the outlines with your modelling tool, you are going to make the figure stand

out from the surface; therefore, choose a design which gives you that feeling in your own mind and you will not fail to reproduce the impression in your work. The illustration on Plate VI gives an example of a suitable design and shows the effect obtained by flat-tooling.

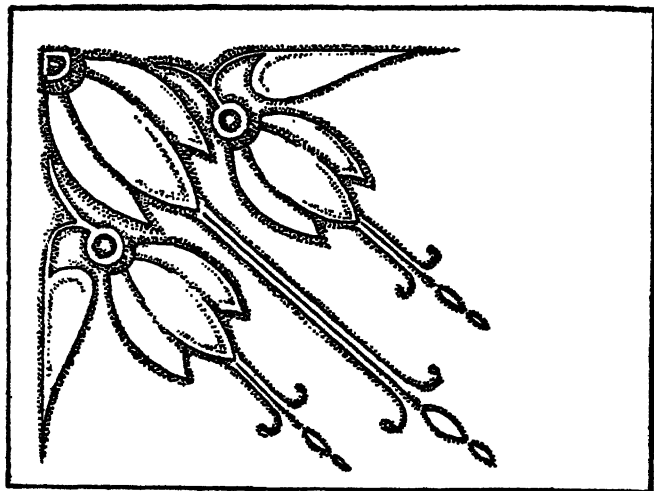


PLATE VI

Directions have already been given for the preparatory steps of cutting the leather, adapting a design to a different size, if necessary, and transferring the design to the surface of the leather. (See pages 8, 14, and 18.) With your tracing instrument, go over any lines which are not perfectly distinct in your design, before you start the tooling.

The leather with the design imprinted on it is laid face side up on a very firm surface, preferably marble,

low enough to work on comfortably and placed in a good light. It is then moistened again to the proper degree of dampness, as directed on page 7, and tested with the modelling tool to see that no moisture oozes from it.

The modelling tool is held and pressed down with the right hand in the position shown in Plate VII; it is at the same time guided and given extra pressure by the middle finger of the left hand. All modelling must be done with slow, firm, even strokes.

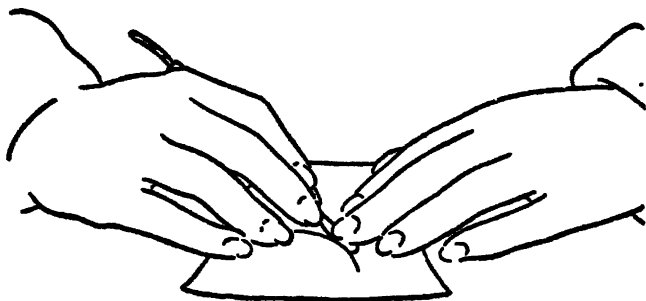


PLATE VII

Select a part of the outline of the design which is coming toward you and, with the side of the modelling tool following exactly along the line as you work, press down the leather outside this line. If the line you are tooling changes direction, as in curves, turn the leather around, but do not alter the position of the tool. At corners, however, or around very small curves, you will have to hold the tool a little straighter and work with the end rather than the side. Each time you press the tool down, be sure to overlap the last impression so as not to leave a little ridge between the impressions. If

you wish a part of the line to be darker, as you would shade it in a drawing, press down a little harder, and conversely if you wish it lighter; otherwise keep your pressure always the same. For long straight lines use a brass ruler to guide your hand. (The brass is liable to stain the leather unless a strip of paper is kept under it.) When lines cross, press down one of them a little more than the other at the intersection. After the outline is all tooled down, put in any inner lines, using the end of the tool held nearly vertical. Remember that in the inner lines, too, the effect will be greatly improved if the more important ones are tooled deeply and the less important, very lightly.

The tooled design will stand out more prominently if background sections, both outside of and within the pattern, are hammered with background stamps. There are many different styles, as described on p. 39, but usually a very simple effect is best when used around a design. A rounded nail or similar very inconspicuous unit will give a pebbled appearance which is sufficiently ornamental yet will not conflict with, nor detract from, the interest of the design.

If the leather has become too dry for further work, moisten the surface slightly before proceeding. Hold the stamping tool upright and tap lightly with the hammer, as already directed on p. 10. Do not hit too hard or you will pierce the leather. If you wish to obtain a shaded effect, make your strokes a little heavier near the design and gradually lighten them as you work away from it, or make the stampings quite close together around the design and gradually separate them with wider spaces. The hammering of the background may be only a few strokes wide, just around the outline, or it may

be carried on all sides to meet a frame-like border line around the edge of the article.

When the flat-tooling and background stamping, if used, are completed, the leather should be left on the marble to dry thoroughly. Never try to hasten the drying by exposing the leather to the sun or to artificial heat. When the work is dry, it may be finished with wax polish or with stains, paints, or dyes, as described in Chapter IX.

Embossing

Embossing, called also repoussé or modelled leather, is the process of raising certain parts of a design to make them stand out like low relief in sculpture. It is used largely in floral figures and, especially when colored, is exceedingly beautiful. The process is not at all difficult, but great care should be exercised not to raise embossed parts too high nor to over-emboss a design, as the artistic effect is ruined when overdone.

Natural-colored tooling calf and steerhide are the best leathers for embossed work. Sheepskin, though suitable for flat-tooling, is not satisfactory for embossing, as it stretches too easily.

The first processes of preparing the leather and tracing the design are the same as previously described for flat-tooling. Then with the modelling tool, tool down all the outlines very firmly and put in the principal veins or lines.

When the design is thus well impressed on the leather, study it very carefully to determine just what parts should be raised, and perhaps later colored, in order to bring them out into character, like the high lights in

a picture. Berries or similar round spots in a design, as the cluster of grapes in Plate VIII, immediately suggest themselves for embossing. The effect of the bunch would be obtained by raising the top grapes more than the others. Make it a study of real artistic discrimination, always being cautioned by the excellent Greek motto—"Nothing to excess."

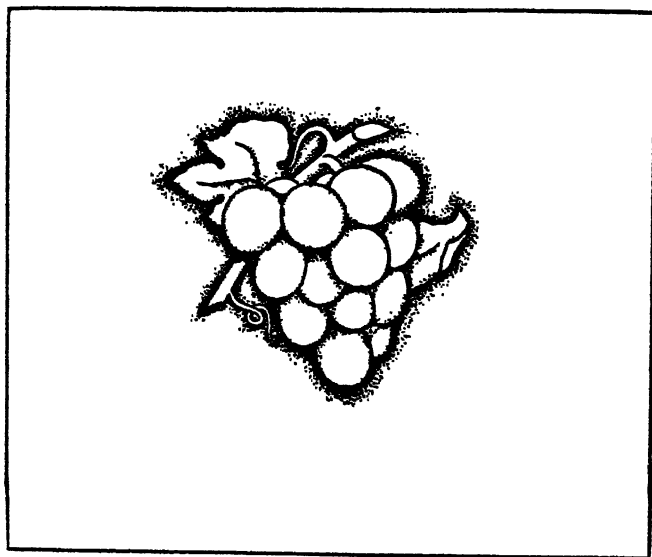


PLATE VIII

When the parts to be embossed have been selected, dampen the leather again on both sides, but not too much, especially on the wrong side, as the tooling on the back will force any extra moisture through to the surface of the leather and leave a discoloration. Lay the leather face up on the marble or other solid surface. Some books give directions for tracing the design on the back and

turning the leather wrong side up for embossing. That method, however, is no easier and the results are not likely to be so satisfactory. With the face side up, therefore, draw the leather toward you so that the part to be embossed comes over the edge of the marble. Steadying the leather with the left hand, work up from underneath with the broad end of the modelling tool, pressing up, with smooth, even strokes, the part to be raised. The leather will be found to stretch so easily that great care must be taken not to push a part higher than desired and not to go outside the exact confines of the area. Work the modelling tool back and forth until the effect comes just as you wish it. There is a ball-ended modelling tool which may be used instead of the regular modeller and is useful for small berries or similar spots, but all the work can be done quite satisfactorily with the simple modeller. The ball end of the hammer, if very smooth, may be used in large areas.

Lay the leather flat on the marble occasionally to study the effect of the embossing and to make sure that the design is not getting out of shape. If any of the lines of the design are becoming faint, leave the embossing temporarily and go over the lines with the tracing tool to preserve them. When all the parts on which you are working have been raised as much as you have planned, turn the leather over with the wrong side up to fill in the raised sections. The best filling to use is a putty-like preparation called "plasticine," obtainable from any dealer in art or kindergarten supplies. As plasticine is oily, be careful not to allow the fingers which are handling it to come in contact with the surface of the leather.

Put your left hand under the designed part and, letting the raised section rest lightly in the hollow of this

hand to avoid flattening it, fill in the hollowed parts with plasticine very smoothly and cover with a piece of paper to prevent the plasticine's adhering to the marble as you proceed with the modelling of another area. If the embossed part is too large to hold in the hand, the leather may be laid face down on a piece of thick flannel or felt for the filling. Some leathercrafters, in fact, prefer to do all the embossing first and then turn the leather over onto the felt and fill all the depressions with plasticine at the same time.

After the embossed parts have been completed and filled with plasticine, turn the leather face-side up. Press the design of the raised parts into shape with the modelling tool by carefully working over the outlines, rounding, pressing, denting, and pushing, until the desired appearance is attained. ~~Press down~~ the background as much as possible. Then put in all the fine lines or other details and hammer the background, if desired, with a simple stamp. Leave the work for an hour or so to dry thoroughly, but do not allow the plasticine to remain in the leather too long, especially if you intend to stain the work. If it is left for more than forty-eight hours, the oil from the plasticine is liable to penetrate the leather and prevent colors from spreading evenly.

When the work is dry, remove the plasticine. If the article is intended for a purpose where the embossed parts will be subject to pressure, it is advisable to stiffen them from the back. For this stiffening make a paste, not too wet, of ordinary flour and water. Spread a very thin coat in the embossed areas and allow it to dry. If extra stiffening is desired, apply a second coating after the first has dried. If the paste is used too wet, or the second coating applied too soon, there will be danger of

the paste soaking through and discoloring the surface of the leather.

Leather which has been embossed will require finishing with wax polish, or it may be painted or stained according to the directions in Chapter IX.

Incising

Incised work on leather is the most effective method of treatment and, when well done, produces a distinctive, professional aspect. It is a little more difficult than ordinary tooling, mainly because of the extreme care that must be exercised in the cutting. Either thick tooling calf or steerhide in the natural color may be used and the skin chosen should have a firm, tight surface, free of defects and blemishes. Even the best grades of sheepskin cannot be used for incising.

Very fine designs are not suitable but any others may be used, especially scroll work, interlaced lines, and heavy leaf effects. Incising is often combined with embossing, where the embossing raises into relief certain spots or units and the incising sinks into deeper contrast the contour, strong veins, or other distinctive lines.

The design is first traced on the leather in the manner already described for flat-tooling and the outlines are all gone over with the tracing tool to make them more distinct. This retracing of the design is even more important when lines are to be incised than when they are merely to be flat-tooled. Select carefully the lines that you wish to emphasize and, as in the case of embossing, restrain yourself from incising too much, for not only would a great deal of cutting weaken the surface, but the effect would also be very heavy and lacking in variety, which really makes for artistic beauty.

When you have decided on the lines to be incised, dampen the leather to the same degree of dampness used for tooling. Leather which is dry will not cut easily; whereas if too wet, it will pull and tear, instead of being cleanly cut. The same knife may be used that you have been using for cutting out the leather, illustrated in Figure A of Plate II, but it must be very sharp. Hold the knife perpendicular to the leather, as shown in Plate IX, with the sharp edge of the blade pointed away from you,

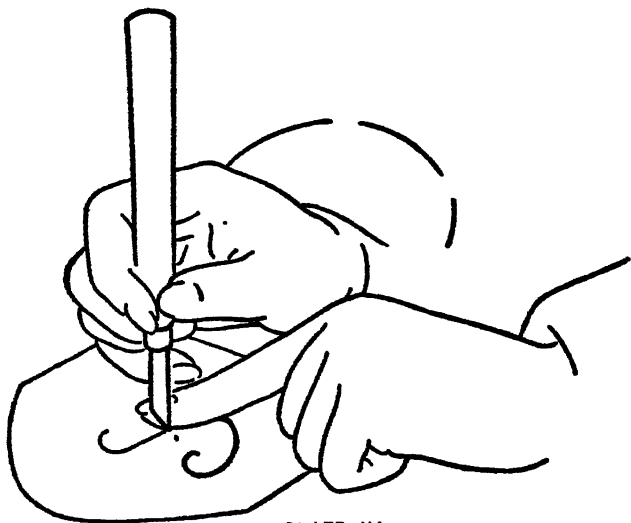


PLATE IX

and be especially careful not to incline it to either side, as the incisions must be absolutely vertical. It will be found easier to control the depth of the incision by cutting away from you than if you should draw the knife

toward you, as in the usual method of cutting. Have in mind that you are to cut only through the top surface of the leather. The rule is that the incision produced should not be deeper than one-third through the thickness of the leather. If the cutting is too deep, it will leave only a very thin, weak layer of leather beneath it and, furthermore, when opened, will make an ugly wide gap with a light-colored center, which cannot be rectified. It is advisable to experiment first on a scrap of the same leather to get just the sensation that the proper cutting of that particular piece of leather gives to your hand, for different skins even of the same kind of leather vary greatly in texture.

Turn the leather around until the line to be cut is coming toward you. Hold the leather very steady by resting the left hand heavily on it. Insert the knife in the end of the line nearest to you, and, with the forefinger of the left hand placed close behind the back of the blade of the knife to guide it, cut away from you with a slow, steady motion. If the line curves, turn the leather around so that you are always cutting directly in front of you. For very small curves the knife must be raised a little more to the point, but it must always be kept at right angles to the leather.

There are some overlaid effects that are produced by slanting the knife, but these will suggest themselves without need of explanation to an experienced worker; the beginner should not deviate from the rule for vertical cutting.

Another very important point to bear in mind is that you must never cut across an intersecting incised line or up to the point of meeting of two incised lines, as at a corner or in a center. The cutting of one of these lines

must stop about a sixteenth of an inch from the point of intersection and be resumed again on the other side, at the same distance away. The uncut parts of such lines are to be depressed by tooling.

After a line has been incised, it is opened by running the narrow end of the modelling tool through the cut. The first time the tool is drawn through, it may cause a slight ruffling of the edge. This is easily remedied by drawing the tool back in the opposite direction. If the incision is made in an inner line, as a deep vein, for instance, both sides of the cut are to be rounded off with the blunt side of the modeller. If the incised line is part of the contour or outline, the design edge of the cut is to be rounded off as just described; the other edge is to be tooled down very firmly with the modelling tool and the background flattened as much as possible.

After all the incised parts have been completed the rest of the design is tooled with flat-tooling; if any parts are to be embossed, they are treated as described in the preceding section, and the background hammered, where desired, with an appropriate stamp.

Incised leather, like embossed work, will require some suitable finish. Because of the variety of shades given by the incising and other tooling, many leathercrafters feel that incised leather is most beautiful when left in its natural color and merely polished either with a dull finish or a bright gloss. Others favor the infinite variety of effects possible with paints and stains. The methods are described in Chapter IX and it is left for the worker to exercise his own individuality in selecting the finish which is best adapted to his particular piece of work.

The designs illustrated on Plate X show the effects

obtained by (A) flat-tooling, (B) flat-tooling with a hammered background, (C) part of the leaf and stem and some of the outlines of the cherries incised and the rest flat-tooled, (D) the entire design embossed.

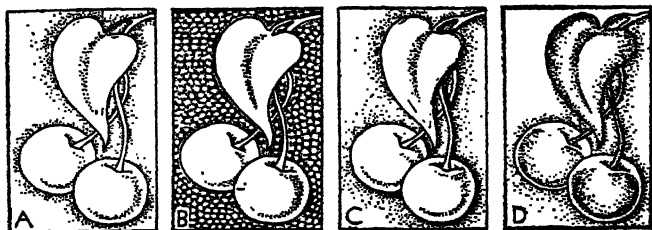


PLATE X.

CHAPTER V

CARVED LEATHER

CARVING of leather is done for the purpose of raising into definite, outstanding relief a certain portion or a unit of a design, without affecting the surrounding area. The element may be quite simple, as the curled edge of a leaf or petal, or of intricate detail, as in the parts of beautiful sculptured effects. This work requires such exceeding care that it belongs to the realm of the professional, rather than the amateur, leathercrafter and only a brief explanation of the process is, therefore, offered for the benefit of those who may wish to attempt its intriguing possibilities.

Heavy calfskin or steerhide of superior quality is required. The design is traced on the dampened leather and the parts not to be carved may be either flat-tooled or incised according to the worker's preference. The directions for both processes are given in the preceding chapter.

Where carving is to be done, the outline around that part of the design must be incised, the incised line opened, and the background flattened down as much as possible. If the leather has become dry during the work, it should be dampened again before proceeding.

Select the point in the incised outline nearest to the place to be raised and insert a very sharp knife as nearly horizontally as you can, cutting through the middle of the thickness of the leather. Keep the knife

as flat as possible so that it will not cut up through the top nor down through the bottom of the leather and take care not to make the slit any larger than the exact area you wish to raise. A special knife with a bent blade is obtainable for this lateral cutting, but the usual knife for cutting leather can be used satisfactorily if due caution is exercised.

When the slit has been made, moisten it inside by means of a small wet brush in order that the leather may stretch more easily. Then insert the end of the modelling tool in the slit and work up against the upper thickness of the leather until it is stretched as much as desired. The cavity thus made is to be padded and moulded into the correct shape by means of a filling. For this, some leathercrafters use cotton batting, but you can obtain far superior results by using scrapings from the flesh side of a piece of the leather, mixing them with quick drying leather paste until you have a putty-like substance. Work this filling in, a little at a time, on the small end of the modelling tool, but do not make the packing too solid.

When the carved section has thus been filled and formed into the correct shape, close the opening by pressing the edge back in place with the modelling tool, holding it until it is firmly set in its original position. The area is then ready for final modelling treatment.

When the carving and other modelling have been completed, the work should be left to dry thoroughly and then colored or simply wax-polished for a finish, according to the directions given in Chapter IX.

CHAPTER VI

TOOLING WITH STAMPS

Blind-tooling

BLIND-TOOLING is the name applied to the process of decorating with metal or wooden stamps of various designs, used especially on book covers, portfolios, and similar articles. It is also sometimes referred to as "hammered work." The sections for blind-tooling are generally of geometric shapes, set off by border lines of flat-tooling, as in the illustration on Plate XI. Blind-tooling may also be combined effec-

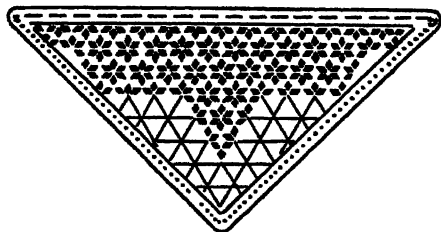


PLATE XI

tively with flat-tooled sections, when the interest in the areas is of the same relative value, or to furnish an ornamental border quite apart from the principal design.

On bark-tanned calf, steerhide, sheepskin and goat-skin, blind-tooling is done in the manner already de-

scribed for hammered backgrounds on page 24. A pattern of the design should be traced through tracing paper onto the dampened leather and the leather again moistened to the proper degree of dampness, as previously directed. (See page 7.) The design of the stamp is imprinted on the leather by striking the stamp with a hammer, as in the illustration on Plate III. The heavier the stroke, the darker and clearer will be the impression. Care should be taken to hold the stamp perpendicular and in the exact direction desired and to keep the lines of the stamping very even. It is best, especially for beginners, to make a pattern of the complete design with all the little figures drawn in and trace it in its full detail on the leather. In this way it is easier to obtain the absolute accuracy which is needed, as even the slightest deviations are very noticeable.

Blind-tooling does not require such a good quality of leather as flat-tooling, embossing, and incising. It therefore offers an interesting means of using such parts of a skin as may not be suited for finer work.

Other leathers not specially prepared for tooling can also be decorated by blind-tooling. In these cases, however, the leather cannot be dampened and it is therefore necessary to work with heated tools. One should have at hand two or three metal stamps of the same design to avoid waiting each time for the tool to heat. A gas flame, alcohol lamp, or any other means of heating may be used. Test the tool each time by touching it to a piece of wet cloth. Wait until the metal just stops sizzling, which indicates the correct temperature for use. Press the hot stamp onto the leather in the proper spot with the hand; it is not necessary to use the hammer.

Gold-tooling

The process of blind-tooling with heated stamps is also the method used in gold-tooling. Special preparatory sizing of the leather, however, is required to make the gold leaf adhere. Such operations to be done successfully require the skill and experience of a professional worker and are therefore not described in this manual.

Making Stamps of Wood or Metal

Metal or hardwood stamps can be purchased in a wide choice of patterns. They can, however, be quite easily made by hand, which not only allows one to develop individual designs but also permits of one's having a generous supply, at a trifling cost.

Wooden stamps are especially easy to make and for general purposes are just as satisfactory as metal stamps. They are particularly useful when a large unit of design is needed. They may be made of short, narrow pieces of any hard wood, such as oak, birch, or maple. Both ends should be cut exactly at right angles to the length. The design should be cut out very accurately on one end by means of a small chisel and a sharp knife and the rough edges sandpapered off very smoothly. For every stamp design, you should also have stamps with only part of the same pattern, a half and a quarter section, to use where a remaining space is not large enough for the complete figure. It is also advisable to indicate on the top of the stamp the exact position of the design on the other end, so that you can be sure that the stamp is turned in just the direction you wish before you strike it with the hammer.

Metal stamps are more durable than wooden stamps; they are preferable for fine work, and are, of course, necessary to use for hot stamping. Short pieces of quarter inch brass rods or the heads of large spikes make excellent stamps. The design is sawed out with a fine metal saw and small metal files. Plate XII shows how

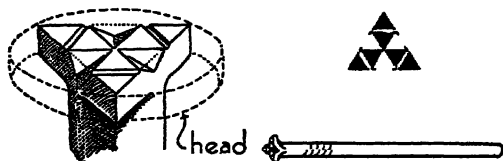


PLATE XII

a stamp was made from a nail head. It is best to fasten the metal stamp into a small wooden top to provide a suitable surface on which to hammer and to facilitate handling if the stamp is to be heated.

Plate XIII suggests some of the many possible variations of designs suitable for either wooden or metal stamps and also indicates how attractive effects can be obtained by merely using the same stamp in different directions.

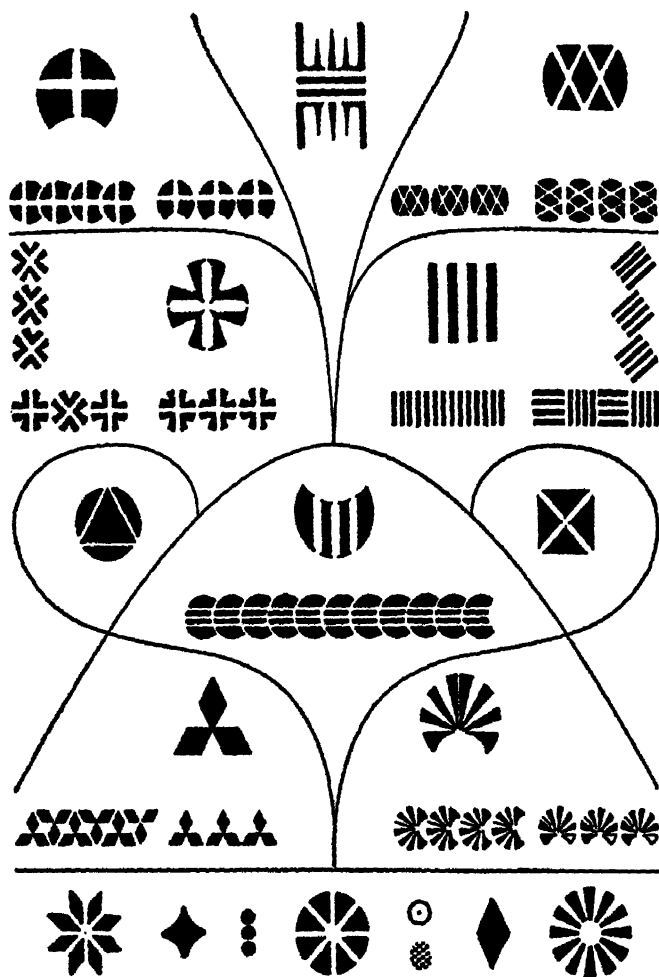


PLATE XIII

CHAPTER VII

UNDECORATED LEATHER

LEATHER, especially in the natural color, has a peculiar charm and, without any decoration, can be made into articles of subtle beauty. Many leathers can be purchased commercially dyed in various colors, or the leather itself, as in the different reptile skins, may be quite ornamental. Lacing of the edges is often the only decorative touch added. A key container, made in this way, is illustrated on Plate XXV. (See page 82.) A number of simple, undecorated purse shapes are shown on Plate XIV, which could be made of any kind of plain or fancy leather. (Directions for inserting snap-fasteners are given on page 72.) Small pieces of suede can be stitched together on an ordinary sewing machine, either in a symmetrical design or a patchwork effect, for bags, sofa pillow tops, table covers, and many other things. The bright shades are usually selected for such combinations. The making of these articles requires no explanation other than the caution to prepare paper patterns carefully before cutting the leather.

For a somewhat more complicated project a pair of sandals is suggested on Plate XV. The soles of the sandals are made out of sole leather, which can be obtained from a cobbler. Cut a paper pattern either by tracing around the foot or by using as a guide the bottom of a shoe of the proper size. The sandals should be slightly longer at the toe than the exact length of the foot. When

the soles have been cut out of the sole leather with a very strong, sharp knife, rubber heels should be fitted on and fastened securely with cobbler's glue.

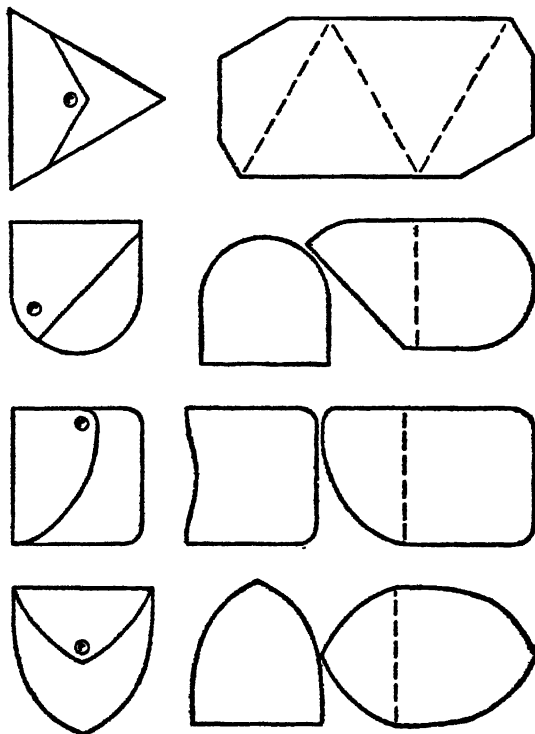
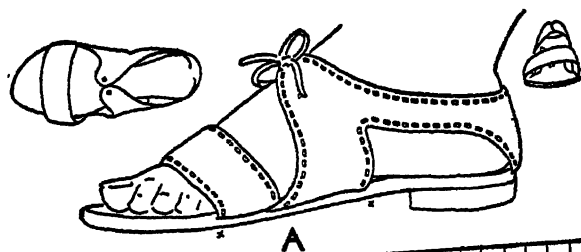
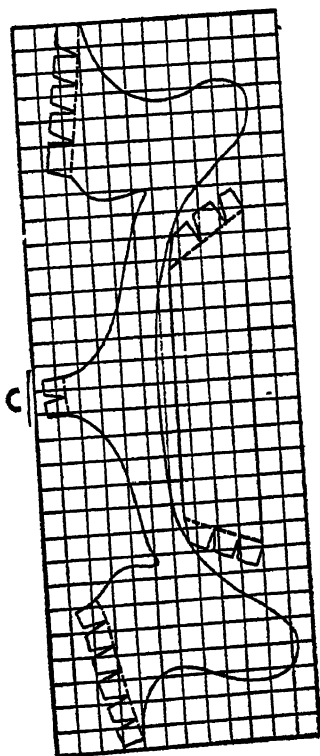


PLATE XIV

The pattern for the upper part of the sandals is in two sections, as shown in the diagram, and should be adapted to the proper size before cutting the leather. All leathers will stretch more or less so that it is advisable to make



B



C

the pattern snug and to select a kind of leather which is quite firm.

After the four pieces of leather are cut, holes may be punched along the edges and a running stitch of lacing of the same or a contrasting color worked through them for an attractive finish. (Directions for lacing are given on page 62.) The small heel portions are then lined with chamois fixed neatly in place with waterproof glue, which withstands the moisture from perspiration. Slits are cut in the sides and back of the sole leather in the spaces between the little crosses in the diagram. Use the same knife as you did for cutting out the soles and make the cut in the middle of the thickness of the leather, as shown in Figure B, and cut far enough in, about one-half inch, to insert the ends of the top sections. Work waterproof glue into the slits with the edge of your knife and then work in the tab ends of the leather, as shown in the finished sandal. Place little strips of wood inside the sandal close over each slit, tighten to the sole with clamps, and leave them on, at least over night, to allow the glue to become thoroughly hardened.

Other articles are described in the latter part of the book which might be made up undecorated, if preferred. There are, in fact, almost numberless uses for which leather is adapted. The few suggestions offered here may serve to arouse the individual worker's imagination and ingenuity to conceive for himself other interesting and useful projects.

CHAPTER VIII

STENCILLING AND CUT-OUT DECORATION

SUEDE, velvet calf, and the ordinary grades of sheepskin are inexpensive and recommend themselves, therefore, for economical work, especially with young children. These leathers cannot be tooled, but they are the ones most commonly used for stencilling and cut-out work. These processes, furthermore, are very easy and quite within the ability of young workers.

Stencilling

The design selected must be simple, as, for instance, either a geometric figure or a conventionalized flower. Never use a complicated or intricate pattern and take special care that there will be no very thin parts or loose hanging ends when cut. Suggestions of suitable designs are illustrated on Plate XVI.

The paper pattern for cutting the leather should be a little larger than the exact size required; the surplus margin is to be used for pinning the leather securely in place on a heavy cardboard or wooden surface by means of thumb tacks. If the leather is thin and inclined to stretch out of shape, paste a piece of brown paper on the back, press it on smoothly with a rubber roller and allow it to dry before proceeding.

The pattern of the design is either traced or drawn

directly on a stencil of tympan paper, fibre board, or celluloid, and the stencil is then cut out carefully and laid in place on the leather. The color is worked onto the leather through the stencil with a soft stencil brush.

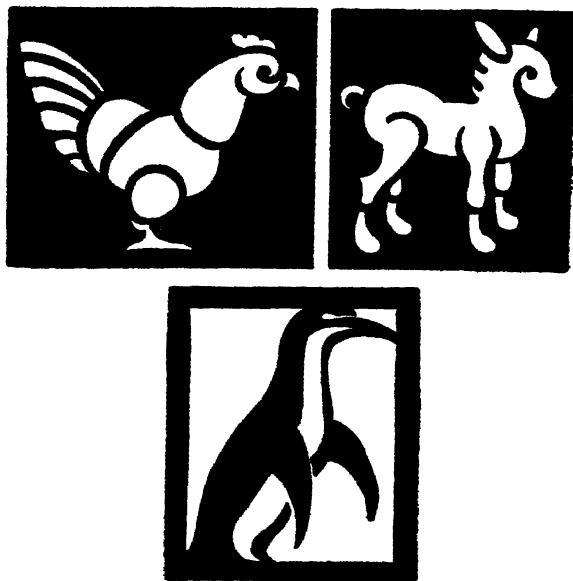


PLATE XVI

Artist's oil paint mixed with turpentine to a very thin consistency, leather enamel, water colors, and leather dyes or stains are all suitable media, the colors being chosen according to one's individual fancy. Only a very little paint or stain should be applied at first. Then remove the stencil very carefully and allow the work to dry. If stronger colors are desired, replace the stencil, when the first coat is dry, and add another thin coating. It is

much better to work gradually, even though it may require several repetitions of the process, than to put on too heavy a coating at one application. Oil paints, if too thick, will clog the pores of the leather, while stains applied too freely are liable to run under the stencil and spoil the work entirely.

Cut-out Work

The process for cut-out work is very similar to that of stencilling. The leather is similarly cut to a pattern a little larger than the exact size of the article. It is then laid wrong side up on heavy cardboard or linoleum. The design should be of the same character as required for stencilling but it is traced or drawn on heavy tracing paper of the same size as the leather. The design is then transferred to the wrong side of the leather with a medium hard pencil or by means of carbon paper. Remove the pattern and cut out the leather as indicated in the design with a sharp cutting knife, carefully following the directions which have already been given for cutting leather on page 7. Dots and small round spots can best be cut with a drive punch or, on small pieces, with the four-way spring punch. Both these tools are described in the chapter on "Stitching and Lacing." (See pages 62 and 55.)

The linings for the cut-out work may be of silk, satin, or skiver of any contrasting shade. The lining should be cut to the full size of the leather, not merely enough to cover the opening. It is, of course, possible to use small pieces of lining, and even to vary the colors showing through different parts of a design, but a beginner should attempt only the complete lining.

Place the leather, with the design cut out, face down, on any solid surface and spread rubber cement or any other strong adhesive thinly over the wrong side. Then lay the lining, face down, on the leather and press it very smooth and tight over the entire surface. Turn the work over and with a small knife remove any little traces of adhesive that may show around the edges of the cut-out section. Place the work on a blotting pad, cover the top with another sheet of blotting paper, and roll smoothly with a rubber roller. Then, still keeping the work between the layers of blotting paper, put it under a large book or other heavy object to press the leather and lining firmly together until the adhesive has dried.

There is no finish to be applied to leather decorated with stencilling or cut-out work. In either case, when the work is dry, the margin of leather which was allowed in the pattern should be trimmed off and the leather is then ready to be made up into the finished article.

CHAPTER IX

POLISHING AND COLORING

Finishing Undyed Leather

WHATEVER finishing treatment, except the final polish, is to be given to the leather should be applied before it is made up into the completed article. Suede does not require any finish, but the usual tooling leathers, if they are not to be stained or dyed, should be polished with banana oil, a good shoe cream, or, for a more glossy finish, with neutral wax polish. A very charming effect can be obtained on natural-colored leather by first going over the leather with a sponge or wad of soft cloth wet with waterproof brown ink, which soaks into the pores of the leather and brings out the natural beauty of the grain. The ink should be applied quickly and with a soft, flowing motion to prevent it from streaking. Allow the leather to dry thoroughly before applying the oil or wax finish.

Staining and Dyeing

A beginner is strongly advised to do a great deal of experimenting with the coloring of leather before attempting to color a piece of work which may be the product of hours of careful tooling, for, even at best

the results are uncertain. It is, for instance, almost impossible to obtain the precise color desired or to match colors exactly on two different skins even of the same kind of leather. Sometimes also there may be natural grease in the leather, which will prevent it from absorbing the dye. If this occurs, the leather should be sponged with a solution of one teaspoonful of ammonia to a pint of water, or the difficulty may be overcome by adding a little pure alcohol to the dye. In some localities where the water contains much mineral, it may be necessary to substitute rain water in mixing the dyes. In addition to these difficulties, there is the general fact that no two skins of leather can be counted on to respond to treatment in exactly the same way. Yet a discriminate use of colors will so greatly enrich the beauty of a design that the results will prove well worth the time and effort the worker may devote to acquiring proficiency in their application.

There are various reliable leather dyes and watercolor paints obtainable, with directions for mixing them. The recently-developed stains for coloring shoes also give excellent results. Small designs or separate units are often effectively colored with the special leather enamels.

The leather to be stained or dyed—calf, steerhide, sheepskin, or goatskin—must be first wet evenly all over and laid on a pad of newspapers to absorb the dye which may drip from the edges of the leather. When separate parts of a design are being colored, the surrounding surface should be covered with a sheet of tracing paper so that drops from the brush will not fall on the leather.

Use a small camel's hair brush to apply the coloring to the details of the design. It is always better to apply only a thin coat at first and add another coat, if neces-

sary, when the first coat is dry. If the background and other parts of the surface are to be treated either with the same color as used in the design or a different color, use a small wad of cotton or cheesecloth and wash a thin solution of the dye all over the wet leather, applying it quickly and lightly with a circular motion. When the first coat is dry, a second may be applied, if a deeper color is desired. To blend different colors in a lovely effect, go over the whole surface, while it is still damp, with a wad of cotton dipped in waterproof ink of a color similar to the color of the background.

Suede can be purchased in many beautiful colors and it is best to procure it in the shade desired. The parts of a design, however, can be colored with dyes and stains as described above, but the colors do not penetrate suede as they do other leathers and are therefore liable to fade.

Use of Oil Paint

Artist's oil paint, when used on natural-colored calf, steerhide, or sheepskin, shows up the grain and pores of the skin, giving a peculiar charm to the work. For oil painting of separate units of a design, however, the leather requires "sizing" to prevent the oil from spreading. The process is therefore too precarious for one who cannot first see it done by an experienced worker. For coloring an entire surface, however, the work is simple and the results very beautiful. The leather is placed on a pad of newspapers, as for staining, but it is not wet. Mix the oil paint with turpentine to a very thin consistency. With a fairly large soft brush or preferably a

wad of soft cloth, spread the paint evenly and quickly all over the leather and immediately wipe it off with a soft cloth, leaving just enough to settle and color the leather. When it is thoroughly dry, polish with a piece of soft chamois skin.

CHAPTER X

STITCHING AND LACING

Machine-stitching

FOR joining parts of articles made of suede or other soft leathers, an ordinary sewing machine can be used satisfactorily and this is, in fact, the easiest and quickest method. It is therefore recommended when light articles are produced in quantity and for those made by young children. A piece of thin paper should be placed between the leather and the feed of the machine to preclude the marks of the feed becoming imprinted on the leather. Special needles for stitching leather can be obtained for the leading makes of machines. Either a matching or a contrasting color of machine silk and a long, loose stitch should be used. The stitching should be done slowly and accurately, as the marks of the needle cannot be removed, if mistakes are made and stitches have to be ripped. Enough silk should be left both at the beginning and at the end of the seam to thread into a sewing needle and work back for a few stitches.

Hand-stitching

Soft leathers can also be joined by hand-stitching or lacing, as is required for heavier leathers, and it would be well for a beginner to practice these more difficult methods on the less expensive leathers in order to acquire

the ability to do attractive work on a more valuable article. The directions are given very explicitly, especially for the benefit of younger workers.

Preparing Edges to be Joined

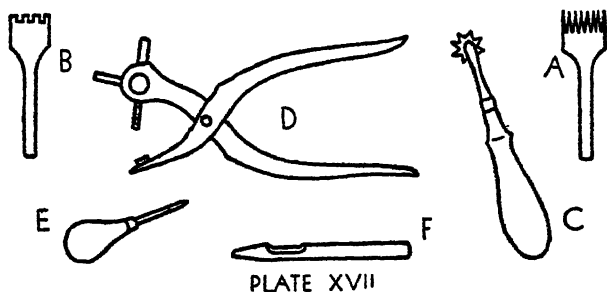
Before joining pieces of heavier leather either by hand-stitching or lacing, the edges should be "skived," or shaved, a little, on the flesh side for about a quarter of an inch in. This is particularly necessary when the leather is thick or when several layers are to be joined flat together. There is a special skiving knife but a razor blade or other very sharp instrument will serve the purpose perfectly well. The skiving should be done by short vertical strokes to the edge. Skiving along the edge will stretch it very badly. Care should be taken not to skive the leather too deep; not more than half the thickness of the leather should be skived off.

Some leathercrafters recommend gluing the skived edges lightly together with rubber cement or some other adhesive in order to hold them securely during the process of hand-stitching or lacing. Others feel that any use of adhesive makes the edge of the work too stiff. If it is used, it should be very light and should not be applied at first within an inch of the points where the stitching or lacing is to start and to end. These spaces must be left free in order that the ends of the thread or lacing may be tucked in, as will be explained later. They are closed, when the seam is finished, by working in a little of the cement or adhesive between the layers of leather with the blade of a small knife.

Making Perforations for Stitching

The perforations for hand-stitching are made at a distance from the edge varying from one-eighth to three-

eighths of an inch, according to the thickness of the leather. The spaces can be measured off and the holes punched in one operation by means of the stitch-marker, illustrated in Figure A of Plate XVII, or they can be



measured off with a ruler and drilled with an ordinary awl. The fid, shown in Figure E, is used to make the holes larger, if necessary. The spaces for the stitches should be of about the same length as the distance from the stitches to the edge of the leather.

When the holes on one edge have been made, lay the edge face down on the other edge to which it is to be joined and mark through the holes to indicate exactly the corresponding positions for the perforations in the second edge. Leathercrafters who use rubber cement or other adhesive to secure edges which are to be joined, usually cement them together first and, after the cement is dry, punch the holes through both layers at the same time. Either method assures that the corresponding holes will be exactly together.

Needle and Threads

Cotton or mercerized thread can be used for hand-

stitching, but tailor's buttonhole twist is stronger and looks much better. One should try, if possible, to use a long enough thread to avoid the necessity of joining. If a join has to be made, either follow the directions given below for disposing of the ends of thread at the beginning and end of a seam, or join the ends of the thread together by unravelling them for about an inch and a half and twisting the little strands together with a little cement to hold them. For sewing, use a blunt-pointed embroidery needle or a piece of fine wire wound into the thread.

The directions for stitching and lacing which follow, assume that the edge to be worked is facing the worker and that one is working from left to right, which is, of course, opposite to the direction followed in ordinary sewing. The same result would be obtained by stitching from right to left, but lacing is generally done left to right and, for clearness and uniformity, hand-stitching is treated similarly.

Running Stitch

There are several methods of hand-stitching, the first of which is the simple running stitch.

Begin the stitching by inserting the threaded needle between the two leather edges and down through the third or fourth hole from the left. Leave about an inch of thread between the layers of leather and insert a little rubber cement to hold this end in place. When the cement has dried, take the needle and thread, which in the meantime have been hanging under the work from the third or fourth hole, and work to the left, in one hole and out the next, back to the first hole. Then work to the right through the same holes you have just used, and continue, in one hole and out the next, to the end of the seam.

After you have made the stitch in the last hole, work back to the left two or three holes, and bring your needle out between the two layers of leather. Leave an end of about an inch of thread, tuck this end between the layers of leather, and insert a little rubber cement to hold it. This double stitching through several holes at both the beginning and the end not only is necessary in order to dispose of the ends of the thread, but it also serves to give added strength to the seam.

In these directions for disposing of the ends of the thread and in similar directions to follow, let it be clearly understood that the work must be pulled together just as tightly as in the other parts; the tucking in of the thread and the inserting of the cement is a matter of working them in between two close surfaces, not in a loose open gap.

By making the running stitches first from left to right and then, instead of ending, working back again from right to left, a stronger seam is secured, but it is seldom possible to make an even-looking seam by this method.

Cobbler's Stitch

The cobbler's stitch is much superior to the running stitch, but it requires the use of both hands for stitching. Small articles may be placed between two sheets of paper and secured in a table vise during the sewing, but larger pieces are somewhat difficult to handle. A thread about three times the length of the seam is needed. Pass the threaded needle through the first hole at the left, drawing half the length of the thread through. Thread the other end into another needle. You now have the thread passing through the first hole with a needle on each end. The sewing is done with the use of both needles. Put the

top needle down through the second hole; then put the bottom needle up through the same hole. Then take the top thread in the left hand and the bottom thread in the right hand and draw the stitches very firm, but not too tight. Continue in the same way to the end of the seam. After you have passed both needles through the last hole, work back one or two holes to the left and bring both needles out between the two layers of leather. Leave short ends of thread, which you tuck in between the layers of leather, and insert a little rubber cement to hold them.

Easy Imitation of Cobbler's Stitch

The following method closely resembles the cobbler's stitch, and is much easier to execute.

A length of thread is needed about three and a half times the length of the seam. Put the threaded needle up through the last hole at the right, but leave hanging through the hole an end of the thread equal to about one-half the length of the seam. Then carry the needle across the top and put it down into the first hole at the left. A loose length of thread will thus lie over the top of the line of perforations. Bring the needle up through the second hole in front of this line of thread, pass it over the thread and down again into the same hole. Pull down until the stitch which has been made by crossing over the loose thread is worked down into the hole. Then bring the needle up through the third hole, pass it over the top thread and down again into the same hole, pulling again until the stitch made is brought down into the hole, and continue in the same way. It makes no difference whether you bring the needle up in front of the thread and pass over it to the back, or *vice versa*, but whichever direction

is adopted should be strictly maintained, or the result will be uneven.

The end of thread which was left hanging through the last hole will have been drawn up and most of it used in the process just described. When you come to the last hole, pass the needle up through the hole and work back one or two stitches and draw the needle out between the layers of leather. Then thread into the needle the short end of thread still hanging through the last hole, pass it up through the next to the last hole, work back one or two more holes and bring the needle out between the layers of leather. Cut off all but short ends of the thread. Moisten these ends with a little rubber cement and tuck them in between the layers of leather.

Lacing (also called Thonging)

The best method of joining leather edges together is by the use of leather lacing, or thonging. Besides being stronger than machine or hand-stitching, lacing accentuates the character of the leather and adds a decorative effect. Lacing is also often used when it is desired to appliqué a decorative unit onto a plain background.

Leather lacing, as has already been stated on p. 5, can be purchased by the yard in different thicknesses and colors, or it can be cut, if one prefers, from a piece of the same leather used for the article. The working end of the lacing should be trimmed to a point; it may also be stiffened with glue or wrapped tightly with a little tin foil.

Cutting a Lacing

For cutting a lacing, take an oval piece of the leather and with a sharp knife or pair of strong scissors, cut a

continuous strip of the desired width, usually about one-eighth of an inch. Begin on the right of the oval and cut round the bottom and up the left side. As the oval decreases, there will be a tendency for corners to form, which must be rounded off, if they occur, as any angular spots in the lacing will be weak and will break easily.

To straighten the lacing, wet it thoroughly and, holding a small piece of folded leather quite firmly between the left thumb and forefinger, pull the lacing several times between the two flesh side surfaces.

Joining a Lacing

It is advisable to have a lacing long enough to obviate any necessity of joining it, possibly in conspicuous places or at points which will be subject to rubbing and hard wear. On the other hand, it is not feasible to work with a lacing more than a yard and a half long, as the constant pulling through the holes will stretch and weaken it. It is quite easy to join lacings and, if carefully done, the joining will be strong and hardly noticeable. The ends to be joined, however, must be good and firm; never try to join an end which has been pulled and stretched out of shape. The two ends are first skived off diagonally, one from the top, the other from the bottom, as shown in Figure A of Plate XVIII. They are then spread with a little rubber cement and laid one on top of the other and pressed into position. They should be held firmly in place by means of a spring paper fastener or a spring clothespin until the cement has hardened, then trimmed off, if necessary, with a sharp knife, and the joining will be hardly discernible.

Preparing Edges to be Joined

Two leather edges which are to be laced together

should be skived off and cemented lightly together, if desired, in precisely the same way as has been described above for preparing edges for hand-stitching. If the lacing is to go around a corner, it is better at least to

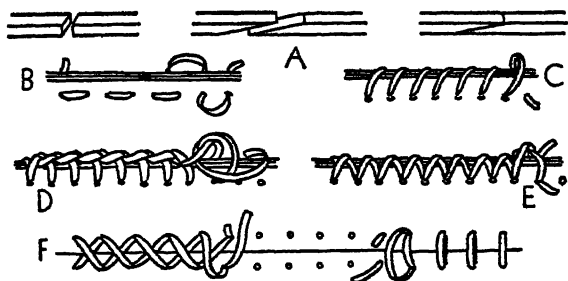


PLATE XVIII

clip off the pointed corner or to round it off entirely. The curve of a one cent piece is a good one for corners in lacing.

Punching Holes for Lacing

In marking the points where the holes are to be punched for lacing, you should first indicate a hole in the middle of a corner, and one hole on each side of this center rather near to it. The distance in from the edge will vary from one-eighth to three-eighths of an inch, according to the thickness of the leather and the size of the article, as in hand-stitching. The remaining space should then be divided up evenly, the space between the holes being about the same length as the distance from the holes to the edge of the leather.

The space marker, shown in Figure C of Plate XVII, is a very convenient tool which assures accuracy in the

spacing, an absolute necessity for attractive lacing work. On lighter-weight leathers, straight holes may be marked and punched in one operation by the little tool illustrated in Figure B. The punches more commonly used, however, are the drive punch (Figure F) and the revolving spring punch (Figure D). The drive punches, which are struck with a hammer, are obtainable in various sizes for different sized holes. The revolving spring punch, or four-way punch, as it is sometimes called, has four cutting tubes of varying dimensions. It is very simple to use and makes for quicker and usually more accurate work than the drive punch. Whichever method of punching is used, the size of the holes should be governed by the thickness of the lacing; they should be large enough to pass the lacing through without pulling and tearing, yet not so large as to leave space around the lacing.

After the holes have been punched in the edge of one of the leather layers, it should be laid face down on the other layer, as in the directions for hand-stitching, and marks made through the holes to indicate the exact positions for the holes to be punched in the other layer. If the leather is not too thick, workers who use rubber cement to secure the edges together, sometimes cement them first and punch the holes through both layers at the same time. This is not recommended, however, as the rims of the holes in the bottom layer, being punched outward by this method, are liable to be rough and jagged.

Running Stitch

The simplest method of lacing is the running stitch shown in Figure B of Plate XVIII, which is done similarly to the hand-stitching already described. Insert the

lacing between the two layers of leather, passing it down through the second hole from the left, in the lower layer of leather. Leave a small end of the lacing to secure between the layers of leather. Skive off this end, spread on a little rubber cement, and tuck it in parallel with the edge. When the cement has dried, bring the lacing up through the first hole and then work to the right, in one hole and out the next, to the end of the seam. When the lacing has been passed through the last hole, put it back through the next to the last hole in one layer of leather only, bringing it out between the two layers. Cut off all but a short end, skive off this end, spread on a little cement, and tuck it in between the layers, parallel to the edges.

Overcasting Stitch

The overcasting stitch illustrated in Figure C is more popular than the running stitch, as it both holds the edges more securely and adds a very attractive finish. The lacing may be continuous around an article, ending back at the starting point, or it may begin at one place and end at another. The directions for starting and ending the overcasting stitching will differ accordingly. The directions given first are for continuous lacing.

Pass the lacing between the two layers of leather and down through the first hole in the lower layer. Skive off the last inch of the lacing, spread on a little cement, and tuck it in between the leather layers, in front of the next two or three holes to the right. Wait for the cement to dry. Bring the lacing, which has been left hanging under the first hole, over the edge, and, leaving the first hole in the top layer unused, put the lacing down from the top

through the second hole. Continue overcasting in the same way to the last hole.

When you have carried the overcasting stitching around the article and have passed the lacing through the last hole, put it through the first hole in the top layer only, which was left unused at the beginning, and bring it out between the two layers of leather. Cut off all but about one inch, skive off that inch, spread on a little rubber cement, and tuck it back between the layers of leather, behind the last two or three stitches made.

Overcasting, when it is not to be continuous around an article, must be started with a straight stitch, before the first slanting one, and ended similarly. Pass the lacing between the layers of leather and out through the first hole in the lower layer, as directed above. Leave an end of about an inch, which is to be skived off, spread with a little rubber cement, and tucked in. When the cement is dry, bring the lacing up from below the work and pass it down through the first hole of both layers, coming out at the bottom just where it was before. From that point, overcast, as directed above, by bringing up the lacing over the edge and down into the second hole and continuing in the same way. After you have passed the lacing through the last hole, bring it over the edge and insert it in the same hole again, but only through the top layer of leather. Bring it out between the two layers of leather, cut off all but about an inch, skive off this end, spread it with a little rubber cement, and tuck it in between the two layers of leather, behind the preceding two or three stitches.

The attractiveness of lacing depends on the firmness, but not tightness, of the stitches, and on a uniformity in their direction. To achieve this, it is necessary, first, that

the holes have been punched at accurate spacings, and, secondly, that the worker always has the edge which he is lacing directly in front of him so that he may control the slant of each stitch as it is made. If any unevenness appears when the seam is completed, it can be remedied by running the thumb and forefinger over the overcasting stitches, first to the right, and then to the left, thus forcing them into parallel positions. Be careful, however, in doing this, not to press so hard as to stretch the edge of the leather.

Cross-stitch

Cross-stitch lacing, shown in Figure E, is a double overcasting stitch, done similarly to simple overcasting. Twice the length of lacing is required and both ends are used in working. For each stitch, one end is inserted into a hole down from the top and then the other end is inserted in the same hole up from the bottom.

If the lacing is continuous around the article, pass the lacing only once through the first hole and draw the lacing through until the ends are of about even length. Bring the lower end over the edge and put it down from the top through the second hole. Take the other end, bring it over the edge and put it up from the bottom through the second hole. Then pull both lacings at the same time to make the stitches firm. Continue until you have passed both lacings through the last hole. Then bring the lower lacing over the edge and down through the first hole in the upper layer only and out between the layers of leather. Bring the upper lacing over the edge and up through the first hole in the lower layer only and out between the layers of leather. Dispose of the ends according to the directions given in simple overcasting.

If the lacing is not continuous, make a straight stitch at the beginning by passing one end of the lacing through the first hole, drawing about half the length of the lacing through, then bringing the same end over the edge and down again through the same hole. Continue with the cross-stitching to the end of the seam. After you have passed both lacings through the last hole, make a straight stitch by bringing the top lacing over the edge and up through the same hole in the lower layer only and out between the layers of leather, and the lower lacing over the edge and down through the same hole in the upper layer only and out between the layers of leather. Dispose of the ends according to previous directions.

Figure F shows the cross-stitch used to join two edges butted together; the left section shows the appearance on top, the right section shows the appearance on the bottom. The method of procedure can be readily understood from the directions above for lacing edges laid one on top of the other.

Buttonhole Stitch

Buttonhole lacing (Figure D) is the most ornamental of all the methods, but it requires a little practice to do it successfully. Straight holes are preferable to the usual round holes, as the lacing can thus be kept flatter. A lacing about three times the length of the seam is needed.

Buttonhole lacing is started with a straight stitch, whether or not it is to be continuous around the article. Insert the lacing between the two layers of leather, bringing it out through the first hole in the lower layer. Skive off the last inch of the lacing, spread it with a little rubber cement, and tuck it between the two layers of

leather. When the cement has dried, bring the lacing over the edge and down again through the same hole. Then bring it over the edge and down through the second hole, but do not pull tight. Take the end of the lacing and pass it over the stitch just made and bring it out in front under the stitch, as shown in the last stitch of Figure D. With the thumb and forefinger of the left hand pull the stitch toward the left, while tightening the stitch by pulling the lacing with the right hand. Proceed similarly with the remaining holes. The most important part of the process is the yanking of the stitch into position with the left hand, while tightening it with the right, for, as in the other methods, the uniformity of direction and the firmness of the work are what make the lacing distinctive.

After you have passed the lacing through the last hole and have made the last buttonhole stitch, the method of finishing will depend upon whether or not the lacing is continuous around the article. If it is continuous, pass the lacing under both the straight stitch and the slanting stitch that were made at the start in the first hole. Pull the lacing over the stitches and back to the left until these stitches are brought into the same direction as the other stitches. Cut off all but the last inch of the lacing and skive this inch off a little. Then pass this little end over the lacing, and, spreading a little rubber cement on it, insert it between the two layers of leather, pressing it firmly in place until the cement dries.

If the lacing is not continuous, the buttonhole lacing must end, as it began, with a straight stitch. Make the last buttonhole stitch in the next to the last hole. Pass the lacing from the top through the last hole, but do not make a buttonhole stitch. Cut off all but about an inch

and a half of the lacing and skive off this end. Then pass it through the last hole again, but only through the top layer of leather. Bring it out between the two layers of leather, spread on a little rubber cement, and tuck the end in between the layers, behind the preceding two or three stitches.

Flattening Lacing into Leather

After the lacing with any kind of stitch has been finished, place the article between several sheets of newspaper and with a mallet pound along the laced edge, which can easily be felt through the paper. This will flatten the lacing into the leather, remove any loose loops, and give a professional appearance to the work.

CHAPTER XI

MAKING UP ARTICLES

Border Lines

ON an edge which is not to be finished with lacing, either to join it to another edge or merely for a decorative effect, it is often desirable to add a parallel border line. This line may be colored with paints or stains according to the directions given in Chapter IX, sometimes effectively in gold or silver, or more frequently in a color to harmonize with other decorative units. If the edge is absolutely straight, the border line, on tooling leathers, may be made with the modelling tool, guided by a metal ruler. The special edger, illustrated in Figure A of Plate XIX, is more

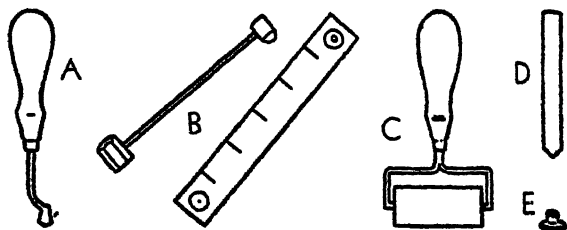


PLATE XIX

convenient to use even for straight edges and is indispensable if the edge is curved. In using the edger, the leather must be dampened, as in other tooling. The

edger is drawn forward with the right foot outside the edge and the left foot marking the leather, at the same time being guided by the left forefinger against it, and a line is thus imprinted parallel to the edge. On non-tooling leathers, border lines may be made by means of a stencil.

Linings

Linings are usually made either of skiver or of silk. They should be cut a little larger than the piece of leather to be lined and trimmed off, after they have been secured in position. If any edge of lined leather is later to be joined to another leather edge, the skiving of the edge should be done before the lining is put on.

Lay the leather to be lined face down on any firm surface and apply a thin, even, coating of rubber cement or other adhesive. When a silk lining is to be used, a good photo paste is best, as it is less liable to soak through and stain the lining. Lay the lining on the leather and press from the center to the edges as smoothly as possible. Cover the work with a blotter and roll with the rubber roller (Figure C) to remove all the little air bubbles and to make sure that the lining adheres to all parts of the leather surface. The work should then be pressed under a weight until dry, after which the edges of the lining should be neatly trimmed off so that they will end just slightly in from the edges of the leather.

Gussets

In making a lady's hand bag or similar article which is to be closed flat, gussets are usually inserted in the

sides in order that the bag may open wider so that the contents may be reached more easily. These gussets are narrow strips, cut with the sides either parallel or tapering to a point at the bottom. In the latter case, the top edge should usually be cut in the form of an obtuse angle so that the center of the top is slightly higher than the sides, the entire gusset, therefore, being shaped similar to a kite.

In articles of suede or other thin leathers, gussets are made of the same leather, but for thick calf and steerhide it is usually advisable to make the gussets of thin calf or goatskin of the same color.

A gusset should ordinarily be cut longer than required, in order to allow for fitting it in at the bottom of the opening. When the gusset has been cut to the desired shape, it should be dampened and creased inward down the center. There is a special creasing tool obtainable, but most leathercrafters merely draw the regular modeler or any other blunt instrument along the crease. This both assures a straight crease and prevents the leather from wrinkling on the right side when it is pressed. When the crease has been made, the gusset is placed under a heavy weight until dry in order to set the crease. Gussets may be lined, if desired, but quite frequently they are only stained on the inside to match the lining in the rest of the article.

Gussets may be stitched in by machine on very thin leathers; otherwise they must be hand-stitched or laced on. In either case, be very careful not to have the edge of the gusset project even the slightest degree beyond the edge of the article. It is better, in fact, to keep the edges of the gusset slightly in from the principal edges. This, however, depends both on the worker's individual preference and his skill in manipulating the leather.

Eyelets

For setting eyelets in leather there are special pliers which are very convenient, but the work can be done quite easily after a little practice with the eyelet spreader, illustrated in Figure D over the unopened eyelet, shown in Figure E. The hole punched for the eyelet should be just barely large enough so that the neck of the eyelet can be worked through it. In inserting the eyelet, be sure that the ring top is on the right side of the leather. Then insert the point of the eyelet spreader between the prongs of the eyelet and, holding the spreader exactly perpendicular, give a sharp blow on the top with a hammer.

Snap Fasteners

Snap fasteners can be set in articles with very satisfactory results by means of the inexpensive tool shown in the two sections of Figure B. It consists of a six-inch steel plate with special anvils on the ends, a steel rod with hammers at the ends to correspond with the two anvils, and two cone-shaped bodkins. The method of using is illustrated on Plate XX.

One should take great care in determining the positions in the article for the top and bottom parts of the fastener, as it is very essential that they come accurately together. In making purses and similar articles, the bottom part of the fastener is in the upper of two leather surfaces. In such a case, it is advisable to insert this part of the fastener before the article has been made up; otherwise the blow of the hammer is likely to force an impression of the fastener through the lower surface.

There are two sections to the bottom and two sections to the top part of each fastener. The two sections of the bottom are shown in numbers 4 and 2 of Figure A on Plate XX. To affix these two sections, first punch a small hole in the leather, illustrated by number 3, using the

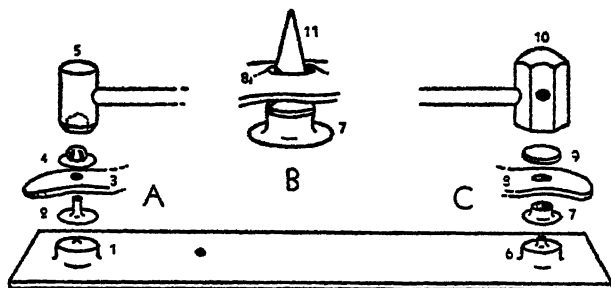


PLATE XX

smallest tube of the four-way punch or a five-sixty-fourths inch drive punch. Push the narrow neck of the lower section up from the wrong side of the leather through the little hole. Then put the top section, number 4, on the neck of number 2, as it projects through the leather and place the work on the anvil with the little pointed pivot. Lay on it the hammer with the small opening, which just fits over the top section. Hold it steady in position and strike the top of the hammer with a regular hammer, giving a quick, strong blow.

The two sections of the top part of the fastener are shown in numbers 7 and 9 of Figure C. Punch a hole in the layer of leather, illustrated by number 8, using the largest tube of the four-way punch, or a three-sixteenths inch drive punch. Place one of the cone-shaped bodkins,

number 11 of Figure B, on the lower section, number 7, of the fastener. (The larger bodkin is the one for the regular-sized snap fastener; the smaller bodkin is for very small fasteners.) Put the layer of leather face side up with the punched hole over the cone of the bodkin, as shown in Figure B, and push the leather down on the bodkin just as far as it will go. Remove the bodkin and the leather will be found to have been forced down into a snug fit around the neck of the lower section of the fastener. Then place the work on the anvil with the small cylindrical top. Put on the top cap, number 9, and lay the larger hammer with the smooth concave bottom over the cap. Hold it steady in position and strike the top of the hammer with a regular hammer, giving a quick, strong blow.

There is also a special spring tool made for inserting snap fasteners. It is more expensive than the simple set just described but, as it can be used for inserting fasteners in any kind of material, one might have occasion to use it frequently enough to make the purchase of it advisable. The spring tool cannot, however, be used when a fastener is to be inserted in a place at a distance within the article exceeding the length of the jaws of the tool. In such a case, the simple tool first described would be required.

If one does not wish to purchase either of the tools for inserting snap fasteners or the eyelet spreader, articles may be sent to shops to have eyelets or fasteners inserted, the charge usually being about five cents apiece, plus mailing costs.

Handles

Various types of handles can be made from leather, adapted in size and shape to the article on which they are to be used. One very simple and useful shape is illustrated in Plate XXI. Two pieces of leather are cut

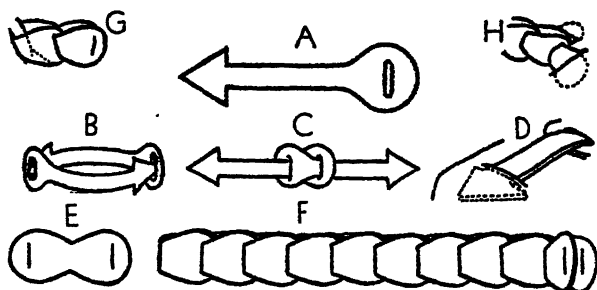


PLATE XXI

of the necessary size, shaped like Figure A, with vertical slits in the round ends. They are then passed through each other as shown in Figure B and pulled into position, Figure C. Slits are made in the proper places on the article of the width of the narrow part of the handle. The triangular ends are inserted through the slits and secured with rubber cement to the underside of the leather. In cutting the slits in the leather, if the knife is slanted to the right in cutting the left slit and to the left in cutting the right slit, the top surface of the leather will lie over the handle at each end and give a neater appearance. Instead of making slits and inserting the ends as just described, the entire handle may be laid on top of the outside and the ends stitched on as indicated by the dotted line in Figure D.

Another type of handle, which might also be used for a belt, is made of sections of leather cut as in Figure E, with slits in the round ends of the same width as the narrow part at the middle of the piece. Each section is folded so that the two slits come together and one section is passed through the two slits of the preceding section until the handle is of the desired length. To secure this handle to an article, open up the first section at the left by cutting at the crease, as shown in Figure G, and use these two tab ends to insert in slits in the article or to stitch on, as preferred. Make the last section at the right without slits, Figure H, and treat these two ends in the same way as those at the left.

Tassels

Tassels are made of thin calf or other light-weight leathers. The leather is cut as shown in Figure A of Plate XXII, the two long strips at the left being folded

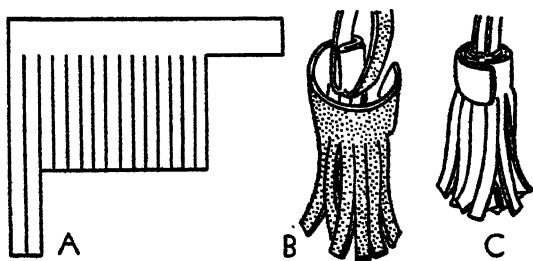


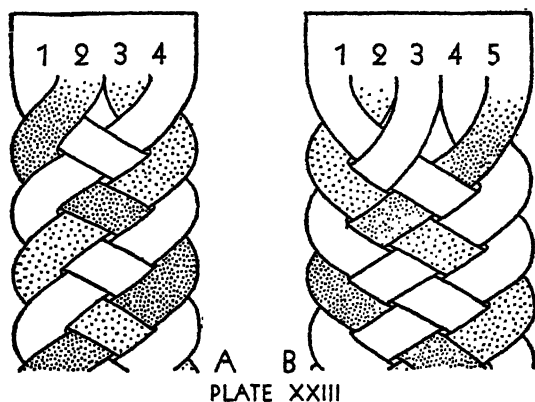
PLATE XXII

up as shown in Figure B. If preferred, cut only the first strip longer than the others. Make it long enough to fold up and form the loop, then to come down again and

be glued with rubber cement to the inside of the top of the tassel. Roll the leather into a tassel as shown in Figure C. Skive off the edge of the tab end and cement the tab around the top of the tassel, holding it firmly in place with pins or thumb tacks, or by tying a string around it, until it is dry.

Braiding

Braided leather is frequently used for decorative effects, and especially for handles. Two methods of braiding are shown in Plate XXIII, (a) for four strands



and (b) for five strands. Cut the leather as shown with an uncut heading, making the strands of whatever width and length may be desired. Secure the heading to a firm surface by thumb-tacks during the work; it is cut off afterwards, when the braid is completed. The strands in the illustration have been differentiated by shading so

that the course of each strand may be easily traced through the braid.

To braid with four strands, as in Figure A, start by bringing the outer right strand, number 4, over the strand next to it, number 3, so that it lies parallel with number 2. Then bring the outer left strand, number 1, under the strand next to it, number 2, and over number 4. Continue in the same way—always bring the outer right strand over the strand next to it; then bring the outer left strand under the one next to it and over the next one. Be careful to keep the strands flat and right side up. To do this, make a sharp, flat turn each time you bring the outer strand across from the right or the left.

Five-strand braiding, as shown in Figure B, is started in the same way as the four-strand braiding. Bring the outer right strand, number 5, over the one next to it, number 4, so that number 5 is parallel with number 3. Then bring the outer left strand, number 1, over the strand next to it, number 2 (instead of under number 2, as in four-strand braiding), then under the next strand, number 3, and over the next, number 5. Continue in the same way, first bringing the outer right strand over the one next to it, then bringing the outer left strand over one, under the next, and over the next. Observe the cautions for keeping the strands flat given above in four-strand braiding.

There are many other varieties of flat braiding, as well as the processes of round, square, and spiral braiding, which may be done with leather strands. These are described in the full treatment of the subject contained in the book on braiding, published in this series of handicraft manuals.

CHAPTER XII

SOME THINGS TO MAKE WITH DIRECTIONS FOR DECORATING

A NUMBER of articles are illustrated in the following pages with explanations of the designs and directions for making. Full-size working blueprints, if desired, may be obtained from The Beacon Press. The choice of leather indicated for each article is governed principally by the requirements for the decoration illustrated, but, within the limits of weight and adaptability, other leathers can be substituted.

The designs are mostly of a general character and suitable for use on any article. Directions for adapting a design to a space of different dimensions are given in Chapter III.

Color combinations are suggested which have been effectively used in developing the articles with the designs as shown, but other color schemes within the entire range of color variety can be selected according to the worker's preference or the use for which the article is intended.

* * * *

Square Mat

(See Plate XXIV)

This square mat can be made of tooling calf of any weight, either natural color or commercially dyed, or of a good grade of sheepskin. The design can be very easily adapted to any dimensions and is suitable to use for a

book cover, portfolio, or other similar article.

Even for such a simple shape it is best to make a paper pattern before cutting the leather.

The design is transferred to the dampened leather and flat-tooled with firm pressure to make the lines stand

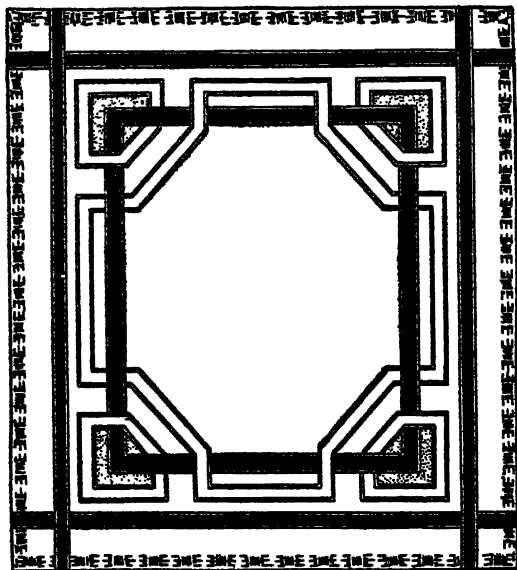


PLATE XXIV

out very distinctly. Use a brass ruler to guide the hand in order to get the lines straight. Especially tool down very hard the under lines where upper lines cross them. The corner sections are hammered with a simple background stamp. The border is blind-tooled with a combining of two different stamps.

When the design is completed, the leather may be fin-

ished with wax polish or it may be colored as directed in Chapter IX. The dark stripes of the illustration were obtained by black paint on a lighter background. The light stripes of the pattern could be painted aluminum color. Such a combination of black and aluminum would be quite effective on green or red dyed calf.

* * * *

Key Container

(See Plate XXV)

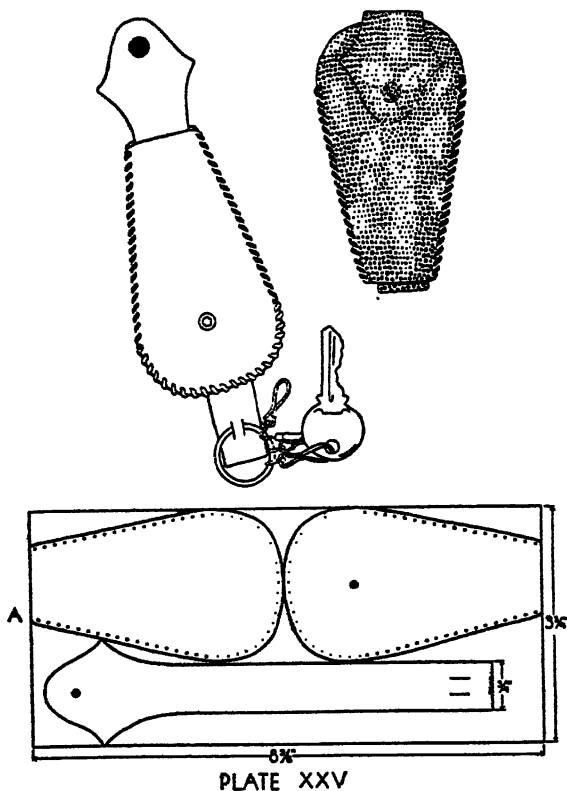
The key container illustrated is made of fancy reptile skin, but tooling calf or any other firm leather might be substituted and a tooled initial, monogram, or other simple design would be appropriate.

Paper patterns should first be made for the three sections: two pieces of the same dimensions for the front and back, and a pattern for the long inner strip, which holds the key-ring and, when the keys are inside the case, extends down the length of the back and over the bottom of the front to close the container with the snap fastener. The leather should then be cut very accurately according to the sections of the pattern.

In putting the container together, the top part of the snap fastener should first be inserted in the shaped end of the inner strip. Two small perpendicular slits should then be made in the other end and a key-ring passed through them. Attach one or two keys so that you can measure just how they will hang in the case. Then put the inner strip between the front and back sections and draw it up until the keys are well out of sight. Bring the end of this strip down the back of the container, fold it over the bottom and up in front. Thus you can find

the correct point at which to insert the bottom part of the fastener.

After the bottom part of the fastener has been inserted,



lace the front and back sections of the container together, along the sides only, with overcasting lacing.

* * * *

Bill Fold

(See Plate XXVI)

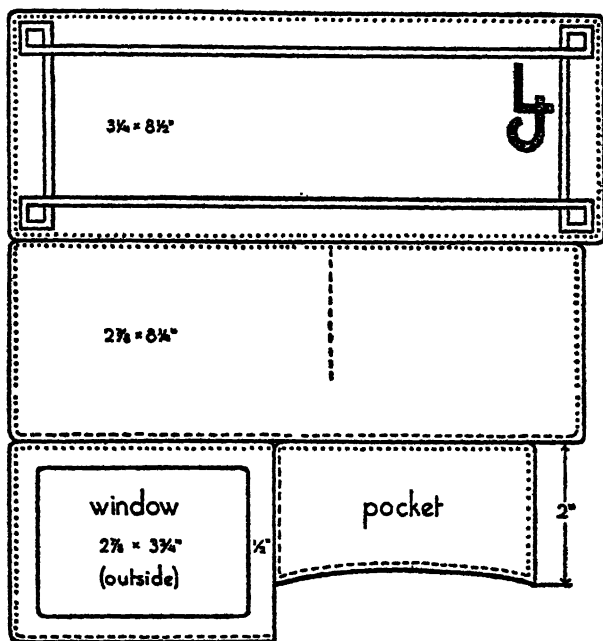


PLATE XXVI

Brown or black tooling calf, firm but not too heavy, should be selected for this bill fold.

Cut paper patterns of the four sections with the measurements given and cut the leather exactly according to the paper pattern. Notice that the larger inside piece is shorter than the outside to allow for the fold of the leather; also it is narrower so that the bills will not come

out to the edge of the bill fold.

For decoration of the outside, only a straight flat-tooled border and a flat-tooled monogram are suggested.

The window should be cut out in the section as indicated and the leather skived off around the four edges. A piece of cellophane or transparent celluloid, cut to measure, is glued to the back and pressed under a heavy weight, as a flatiron, until dry.

The small pocket is cut two inches deep and two and seven-eighths inches long, and is fastened to the face side of the large inner piece by a row of running stitches on the inside edge only. The outer edge of the pocket should come flush with the edge of the inner piece and the bottom and other side will later be laced with the other parts.

Skive off the edges for lacing and use rubber cement to secure the three sides of the larger inner piece, together with the window part and small pocket, onto the outside. Start with the extreme ends and be sure that the edges are placed exactly together. The outside will be a little fuller than the inside at the middle for the fold. Punch holes for lacing and use any lacing stitch desired but do not make it bulky. To take care of the fold, make the holes for the lacings a little closer together on the inner piece for about five or six holes on each side of the center.

Finish with banana oil or wax polish.

* * * *

Combination Bill Fold and Coin Purse

(See Plate XXVII)

A combination bill fold and coin purse is shown in Fig-

ures A and C. It should be made of very thin calf or goatskin, as it all folds into a shape about three inches square and should not be too bulky. If goatskin is used, a light-weight suede lining of any color desired could be added. There is no decoration in the illus-

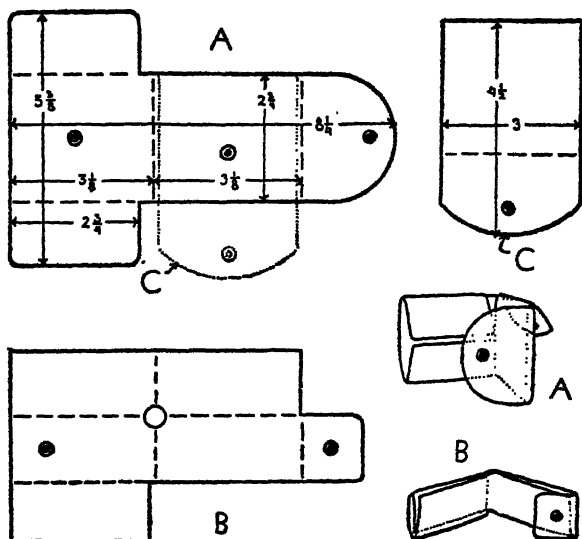


PLATE XXVII

tration, but a blind-tooled border would be effective and a flat-tooled monogram could be used on thin calf.

Make a paper pattern first, cutting the longer section so that a bill will fit from the left end to the line of dashes which indicate the beginning of the flap, and enough longer for the flap to fold over to the snap fastener at the left. Cut the leather according to your pat-

tern, then dampen and crease under a heavy weight where indicated by the dash lines.

Section C for the coin purse is made to fit to the inside of the bill fold and fold over either the top or bottom to meet the snap fastener, as shown by the dotted lines. First dampen and crease the small piece as indicated, then place it in position. If the leather is thin enough, it can be stitched onto the bill fold around the three sides by the sewing machine, or it may be hand-stitched or laced with a running stitch. If the snap fasteners are to be inserted by the simple snap fastener set described on page 72, they should be put in before the purse is stitched on. Finish with a wax or cream polish as directed in Chapter IX.

Design B shows a simple bill fold, which, like the combination just described, folds up very compactly, as shown in the smaller figure, so that thick leathers are not suitable to use. Thin calf or goatskin should be selected.

Make a paper pattern slightly larger than the size of a bill with extra length and width as indicated for the tabs and cut the leather correspondingly. Initials and blind-tooling could be added, if desired. Dampen the leather, crease where indicated by the dash lines and press under a weight. Insert the snap fastener when the leather is dry. Finish with wax polish.

* * * *

Cigarette Case or Bill Fold

(See Plate XXVIII)

This design could be developed undecorated in suede or reptile skin or, as here illustrated, tooled on thin tooling calf.

Cut a paper pattern to fit around a package of cigar-

ettes, allowing three-sixteenths of an inch margin on both sides for lacing. Glue linings of leather for extra body to the inside of the two side sections and also a strip on the inside where the slits are to be made for the flap.

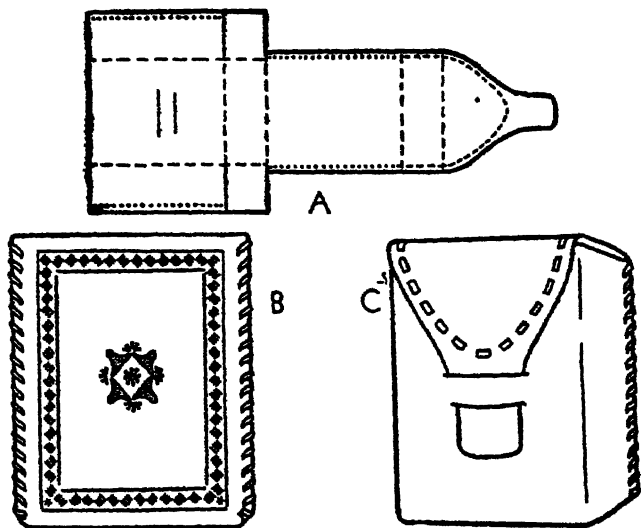


PLATE XXVIII

The simple design is composed of flat-tooling and background stamping. The border is of blind-tooling with straight lines flat-tooled. This border, though shown only on one side of the case, could also be used on the reverse side. A monogram could be flat-tooled on the flap.

If coloring is desired, the center and tooled border might be dyed yellow. Then wash the entire surface of the leather with blue dye. The yellow parts will become a soft peacock color. Directions are given in Chapter IX.

The coloring, if used, must be done before the holes are punched for lacing.

The single overcasting stitch is shown for lacing, but the cross-stitch or buttonhole stitch would be more decorative. The lacing is here carried in a running stitch around the flap, but the overcast stitch could be used entirely around it.

The same pattern and design might, with slight adaptation, be used for a bill fold instead of a cigarette case. The side sections would simply be creased in and not laced to the other part of the bill fold. A complete set could be made of a small coin purse, a bill fold, and a comb case.

* * * *

Bill Fold and Match Book Holder

(*See Plate XXIX*)

Thin tooling calf, either natural-colored or commercially dyed, should be selected for this set.

A paper pattern should be made of the length and width indicated, so that a bill will lie flat in it, and the leather cut accordingly. The simple design is to be flat-tooled. The leather should then be polished with banana oil or wax polish. An inner section two inches wide is to be attached to both edges of the cover by hand-stitching or lacing. A snap fastener may be inserted, if desired, to hold the bill fold securely together.

The cover of the match book holder and the small pocket section should be cut according to paper patterns made in the dimensions given. The cover may be lined with skiver or silk, either of a matching or a contrasting color. The pocket section is attached to the cover by

running stitches of lacing, which is continued around the cover for a decorative finish.

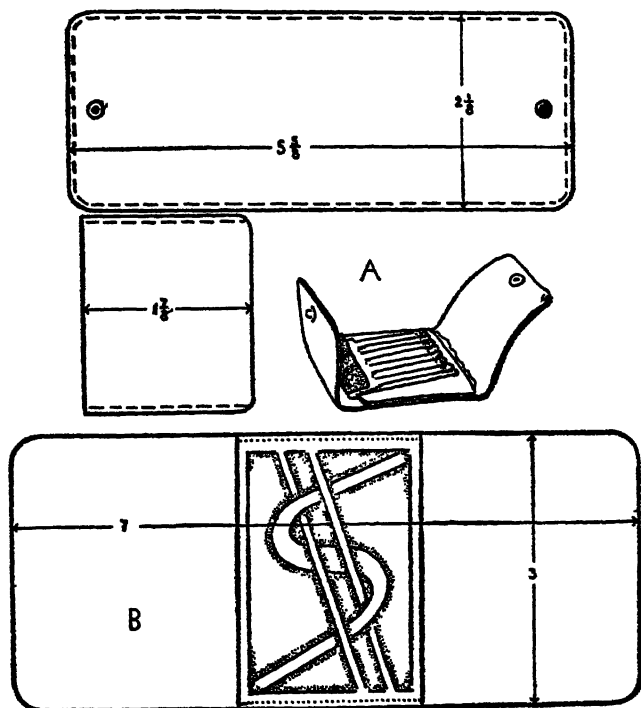


PLATE XXIX

* * * *

Tobacco Pouch

(See Plate XXX)

This zipper pouch has been especially arranged for holding tobacco, with pockets added for matches and cigarette papers. If made according to the dimensions

given, it may be used, if preferred, for package cigarettes.

No decoration has been indicated; therefore any suitable leather may be used. Paper patterns should first be made for the three sections, Figures, A, B, and C. Section A is for the back, the sides, the bottom, and the lower front pocket. The bottom of the pouch is made by creas-

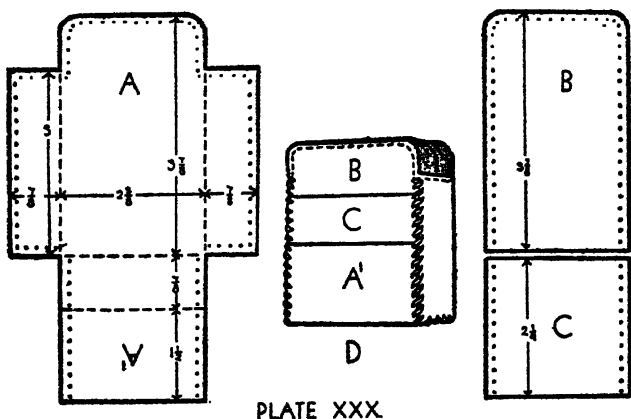


PLATE XXX

ing on the upper row of dash lines and again on the second row of dash lines. Section B makes the full length front, and section C, the larger pocket.

After the three sections of leather have been cut according to the patterns, the leather of section A should be dampened, the sides folded in, as indicated by the dash lines, and the creases set under pressure until dry. Then dampen again and fold on the upper row of dash lines for the back edge of the bottom and press again until dry. Dampen again and fold on the lower row of

dash lines for the front edge of the bottom and press until dry.

The small holes for stitching in the zipper should be made, as indicated, along the tops of the front and back and across the top edges of the sides. Larger lacing holes should be punched for joining the sections. In order to make sure that the corresponding holes will come exactly together, set the pieces in place, as shown in the illustration of the finished pouch, and indicate where the punching must correspond. In the illustration of the front of the pouch, A¹ is the pocket formed by folding up the lower end of section A; section C is placed behind A¹, with its bottom edge in the crease; section B is placed behind both C and A¹, with its bottom edge also in the crease. Use the overcasting stitch for lacing.

A zipper, three and one half inches long, is to be sewed in at the top. If the leather is of light weight and the zipper is attached before the pouch is made up, it can be stitched in on a regular sewing machine; otherwise it must be sewed in by hand. A ball-ended zipper should be selected and it should be inserted with the closed end at the right of the pouch. The width of the zipper material is sewed to the top edges of the sides of the pouch, and the length of the zipper, along the edges of the front and back. Rubber cement or any other adhesive may also be used for added security.

* * * *

Pocket Picture Frame

(See Plate XXXI)

The picture frame requires a firm-bodied leather but not too thick. If it is to be decorated with the flat-tooled design shown, a medium-thick tooling calf should be

selected. The dimensions given may, of course, be varied to any special size desired. The design can be developed with spaces for two pictures, as illustrated, or for one picture and a pocket, or simply for one picture. A lining of contrasting silk would add to the attractiveness.

Make paper patterns for this cover and the inner sections as you wish them to be, and cut the leather to correspond with the patterns. Cut the openings for the

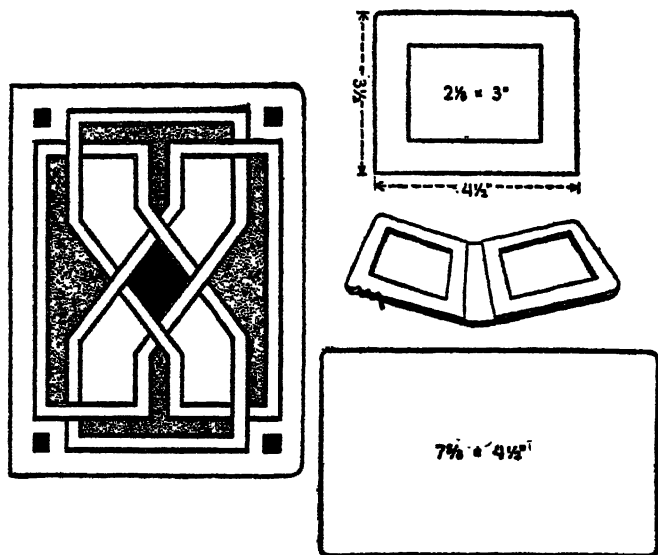


PLATE XXXI

windows with a very sharp knife or a razor blade, and glue pieces of cellophane or transparent celluloid to the back. Place under a heavy weight to dry.

The decoration is shown for one half of the cover only.

It may be repeated on the other half or a simple ornamental figure might be used in the center of the back. The design is for flat-tooling and background hammering, with the center and four little corner squares stained a darker color. If preferred, an initial or a monogram might be used in the center and an ornamental background design stamped in the corners. Paints, stains, or dyes may be used according to one's individual taste. (See Chapter IX.)

* * * *

Envelope Hand Bag

(See Plate XXXII)

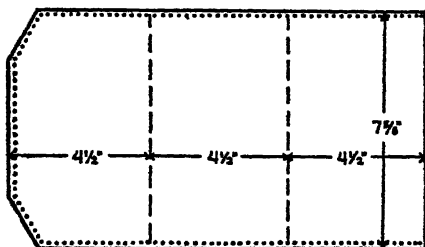
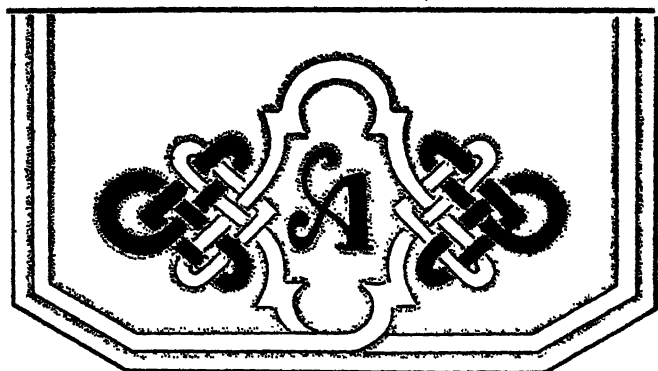


PLATE XXXII

When the cover is completed, the edges of both the cover and the frame sections should be skived a little and punched for lacing. Use any method of lacing preferred.

The most satisfactory kinds of leather for a serviceable hand bag are tooling calf and thin steerhide.

The dimensions, indicated in the pattern illustrated, call for one main piece of leather and two gusset sections, four inches long and of whatever width desired.

After the leather has been cut to the paper pattern, the design is transferred to the dampened leather. As shown here, the design calls for flat-tooling. It has been very strikingly carried out on red tooling calf, by being first flat-tooled and then the dark parts of the design stained black and the light parts stained aluminum. After the leather is tooled, stained and finished as directed in Chapter IX, the snap fastener should be fixed in the proper place.

If a lining is desired, it should be prepared by means of a paper pattern to fit in the bag. Pockets and a zipper fastening might also be added to the lining before it is inserted in the bag.

The gusset sections should be wet and creased in the middle, flesh-side out, and pressed under a weight until dry.

The edges of the gussets should be skived and also the sides of the bag into which the gussets are to be placed. The gussets are then glued to the sides and allowed to dry.

Punch the holes through the edges of bag and gussets, for lacing the gussets in, and carry the lacing around the flap for an effective finish.

Round Hand Bag

(See Plate XXXIII)

Tooling calf, either natural-colored or commercially dyed, should be used for this bag. The dimensions are given for a circular bag seven inches in diameter but it could be made larger or smaller, as desired.

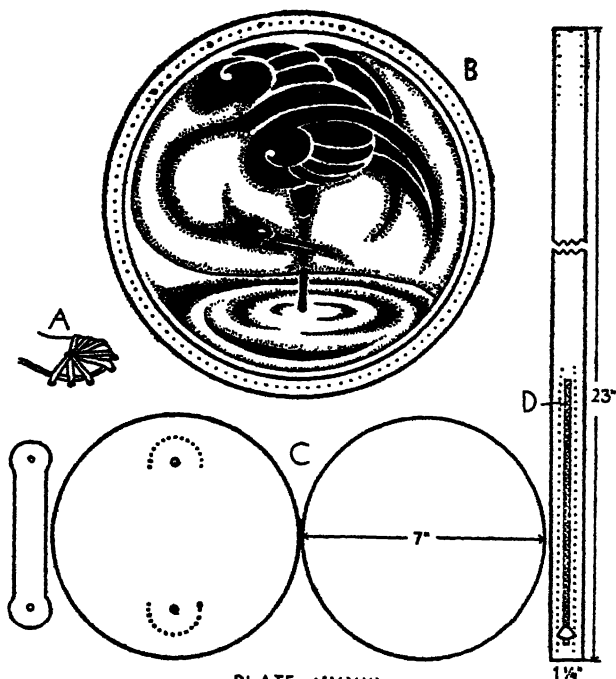


PLATE XXXIII

Make paper patterns for the circular front and back of the bag, and also a straight piece for the gusset, about one and a quarter inches wide and long enough to go

around the circumference. For a seven-inch bag, this gusset will be twenty-three inches long. Cut the leather according to the patterns.

Make a slit in the middle of the width of the gusset for the zipper, usually six inches long. The slit should be in the middle of the length also, so that the joining of the ends of the gusset will come at the bottom of the bag. Wet the gusset, crease it in the middle with the flesh-side out and leave it to dry under pressure. When it is dry, punch small holes around the slit, but not too close to it.

Dampen the leather of the front circular section and transfer the design. Use flat-tooling. On natural-colored calf, color the design with bright dye or stain, red, yellow, or light green. On bright dyed calf, use white oil paint or India ink. Finish according to the directions given in Chapter IX. If the entire surface of the front is dyed or stained, the back and gusset should be similarly treated.

Cut the handle to the size desired for the bag, punch holes in both ends and lace it onto the outside of one circular section, as shown in Figure A.

Skive off the edges of both front and back of the bag and also both edges of the gusset, and glue the gusset to the two surfaces. Make the joining of the gusset in the same way as described for joining lacing on page 60. When the gusset has been glued in place and allowed to dry, punch holes all around and lace with any of the lacing stitches.

Make a lining of silk reinforced by cheesecloth pasted to the back with photographer's paste. Cut the lining the same shape as the bag but an inch smaller. Glue the zipper to the lining and make small holes with the awl in the lining around the zipper to correspond with those in

the gusset around the slit.

Insert the finished lining in the bag and glue the zipper in place along the slit. Run a lacing stitch through the small holes in the gusset and lining to hold the zipper more securely in place.

* * * *

Book Cover

(See Plate XXXIV)

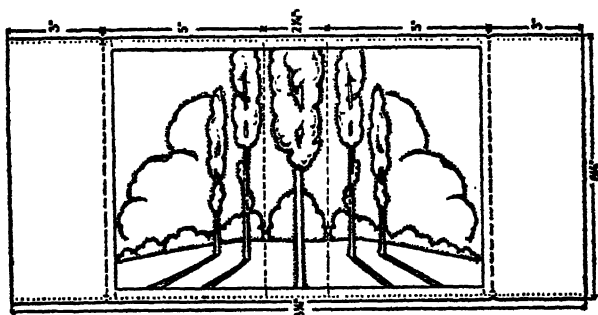


PLATE XXXIV

The design calls for flat-tooling and slight embossing and, if carried out in this way, tooling calf is required. In adapting the measurements to your paper pattern, before cutting the leather, be sure to allow for the thickness of the leather and also the margins required for lacing. The pattern can be cut all in one piece or, more economically, with one large piece for the cover and two small sections to be laced on at top and bottom and around the front edges.

The design is transferred to the leather and flat-tooled, with slight embossing, if desired, of the trees and clouds. For coloring, a yellow dye, followed with a green dye

darker at the bottom and gradually lighter toward the top, gives a beautiful effect. Directions for coloring are given in Chapter IX.

If embossing is used, the main part of the cover should be lined.

After the tooling, coloring, and lining are completed, the edges to be joined should be skived and glued together. Then the holes should be punched for lacing and any of the methods of lacing may be used.

A bookmark might be made to match the cover. It should be fastened to the top edge of the cover a little to the right of the center.

* * * *

Cover for a Prayer Book or Bible

(See Plate XXXV)

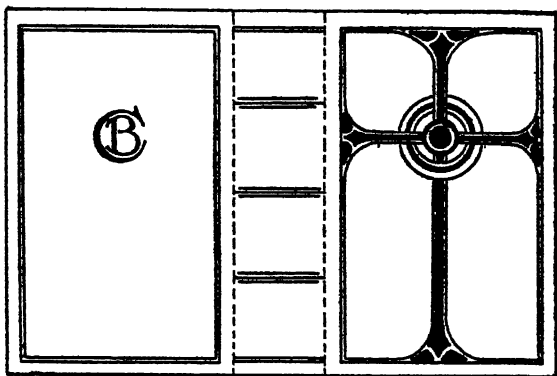


PLATE XXXV

The illustration shows a design especially adapted for a prayer book or Bible. The pattern should be cut to the measure of the book for which it is to be used, with

an allowance on both ends for flaps to be folded in. Follow the suggestions and directions for the preceding book cover.

Natural-colored tooling calf would be the best leather to use. The design should be flat-tooled and the straight border lines incised. A monogram is suggested for the back but any small design might be used. Stain the leather with a mahogany brown dye, paint the design with black India ink and the light parts with aluminum leather stain. The monogram on the back should be colored to harmonize with the front. The incising of the border lines will cause them to absorb more of the mahogany stain and thus stand out in an effective dark outline. Finish with wax polish.

The straight, narrow sections of leather to be placed at both ends, as in the directions for the book cover, may be hand-stitched or laced on. In fact, buttonhole lacing carried all around the cover would be exceedingly effective.

* * * *

Watch Stand

(See Plate XXXVI)

A leather watch stand is quite simple and inexpensive to make and is an attractive and useful ornament on a dresser or desk, either for one's personal use or as a most acceptable gift.

Make the frame as illustrated in Figure A of stiff cardboard covered with skiver or heavy silk.

Use tooling calf for the square front, either in natural color or commercially dyed. After the front has been cut according to a paper pattern, dampen the leather

and transfer the design. Then tool the outlines with flat-tooling. Be sure that the circle for the watch space is perfectly round, and tool it very deeply. Then cut it out with a very sharp knife or a razor-blade.

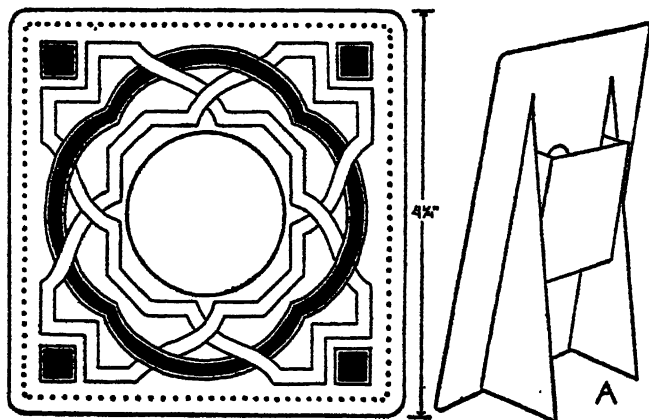


PLATE XXXVI

If natural-colored calf is used, it could be stained a rich mahogany shade, then washed with waterproof brown ink and wax polished, as explained in Chapter IX. If the watch stand is for a woman, colored effects may be preferred. Silver and black paint on green, red, rose, or blue tooling calf would be most attractive; the color might be chosen to correspond with other pieces of a desk set or with the color scheme of a room.

After the leather has been tooled, colored and finished, it should be pasted on cardboard, backed with the same lining as the rest of the frame. Punch holes for lacing around the four sides. Buttonhole lacing would make the most effective finish.

* * * *

Book Ends

(See Plate XXXVII)

Make a cardboard pattern of the book ends, being sure to provide for flat bottom sections wide enough to support the sides steadily. Have two pieces of light-weight, galvanized iron cut by a tinsmith from the cardboard pattern or cut them yourself with a pair of tinsmith's shears. File off the rough edges and bend the pieces into shape according to your cardboard pattern.

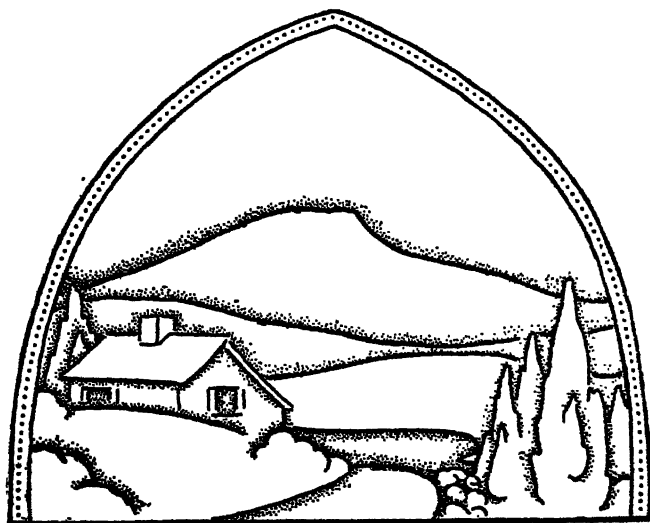


PLATE XXXVII

Cut a paper pattern for the lining, which should be of skiver or any other material desired. In pasting the lining on the frame, start at the top of the back, then bring it

down close in at the bend, over the bottom section and then under it, ending at the bottom of the front. Use any good adhesive to secure the lining to the frame.

Tooling calf should be used for the front pieces. A narrow margin must be allowed around the oval part for finishing with lacing. The design is traced on the dampened leather and flat-tooled. The trees, clouds, and foreground may be slightly embossed, if desired. If the leather is to be dyed, it is best to use but one color, blue, green, or brown, making it darker at the bottom and gradually lighter toward the top. Finish as directed in Chapter IX.

If you wish a padded effect, glue thin cotton batting to the front of the iron frame. The layers of cotton batting often found in candy boxes would be suitable to use.

When the leather is ready, spread a little glue on the back and affix it to the plain or padded iron frame. Be especially careful to secure the leather and lining where they meet at the bottom. When it is dry, punch holes around the edge as close to the iron as possible and finish with cross-stitch lacing.

* * * *

Desk Set

(See Plate XXXVIII)

Natural-colored tooling calf of medium or rather heavy weight should be used for this desk set, which consists of eight leather parts: (A) two strips for the ends of the blotter pad, (B) two book ends, (C) a letter rack with front section as shown in Figure C and back section like the book end, (D) a writing tablet holder, and (E) a picture frame. Make paper patterns first, of all parts in the

sizes desired. The blotter ends may be made of double width, if preferred, and one half folded over the side of the blotter pad. If this is done, allowance must be made for the thickness of the cardboard base and two or three blotters to be inserted.

The design when transferred to the leather should be flat-tooled and the fishes might be embossed. It can be left in the natural color or stained or dyed to any special color scheme. A very effective treatment was obtained by making the corals red against a blue background and the

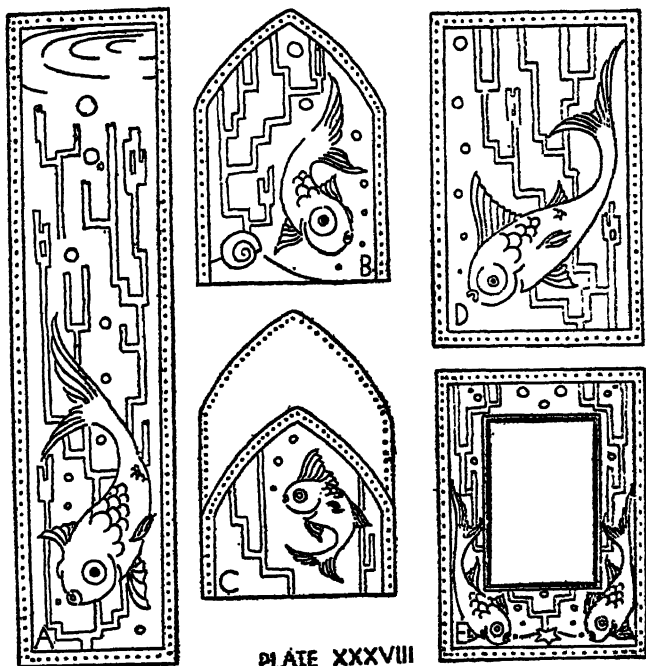


PLATE XXXVIII

fishes colored with aluminum paint with touches of India ink.

The blotter pad is made of heavy cardboard covered with skiver or other thin leather dyed to match the designed leather.

The book ends and letter rack are made of thin galvanized iron, which one can have cut by a tinsmith or can cut for himself with tinsmith's shears. The edges should be filed off smoothly and the pieces bent into the proper shapes. Line the book ends and letter rack with the same kind of skiver or thin leather as used for the blotter pad and press it on smoothly. In the book ends the lining should be carried down the back, over the top of the base and then under the base to the front. For the letter rack, one piece of lining should start at the inside of the front, extend over the base section and up the inside of the back. A separate piece will be needed for the bottom of the base.

The writing tablet holder is made of heavy cardboard, faced with the lining used in the other articles. A narrow strip of leather is needed at one end to insert the cardboard back of the tablet.

The picture frame may be made of heavy cardboard or galvanized iron, with a cardboard stand glued to the back. Both the stand and the back should be covered with lining. A heavy piece of cellophane is glued to the back of the leather for the window.

The lacing should be chosen to correspond with the coloring used on the leather.

A running stitch is used on the inner sides of the long strips for the blotter pad. Elsewhere use the overcasting stitch. At the top of the picture frame, lace only the

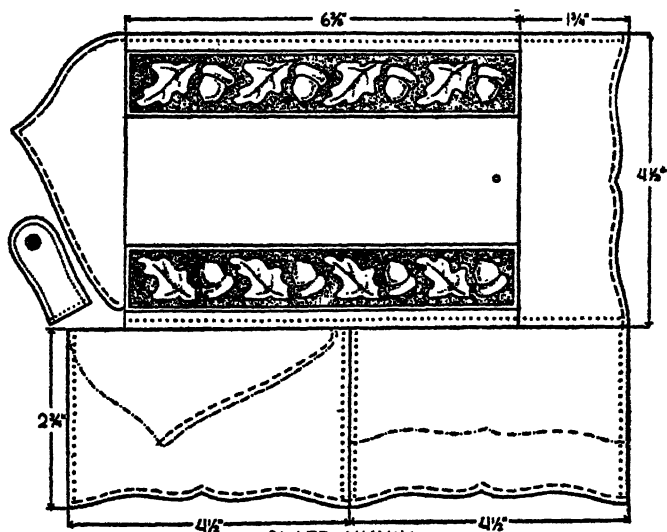
leather, not including the lining, in order to leave an opening for inserting the picture.

* * * *

Sewing Kit

(See Plate XXXIX)

The paper patterns for this sewing kit may be cut in four or six pieces, whichever is more economical for the piece of leather to be used. As illustrated, there are four pieces: the large outside piece with the ends which are to be creased down to form the smaller inner pocket and the scissors-holder, the two similar large pockets which are to be placed crosswise across the two ends with the smaller pocket folding over one and the scissors-holder



folding over the other, and the small tab for the snap fastener. A strap for a thimble might also be added.

Tooling calf of medium weight is the best leather to use. As originally done, the design was flat-tooled on natural-colored calf and the background hammered with background stamping. It was then dyed Chinese red, the background tooling taking on a deeper color. It was lined with black satin and put together with black lacing.

After the cover has been tooled and colored as desired and the other pieces colored accordingly, the lining, if used, is pasted in. The tab for the snap fastener is glued or stitched on and the snap fastener inserted. The scissors-pocket is attached by a running stitch along one side to one of the larger inner pocket sections. The running stitch is carried around the top of the scissors-pocket to strengthen it. Similarly the small pocket and the two larger pockets are reinforced along the top edges by rows of running stitches. The edges to be joined are then skived and glued lightly together. When the glue is dry, holes are punched and any method of lacing is used to join the sections neatly and securely.

A very attractive belt may be made of tooling calf or tooling ooze, decorated with metal or wooden stamps.

The belt should be cut to measure, allowing enough to fold one end back for inserting the buckle and loop and as much extra length as may be desired on the eyelet end.

The design shown here is made with the use of two stamps, a triangle and small oblong, but any other combination of designs might be substituted. These simple stamps could be easily made by hand as suggested in Chapter VI, where directions for the use of stamps are also given. The border lines along the top and bottom

edges of the belt should be made with the edger, described on page 69.

This design would be effectively brought out by coloring with any bright shade of leather enamel on natural-colored leather. The border lines also would be similarly treated.

* * * *

Belt

(See Plate XL)

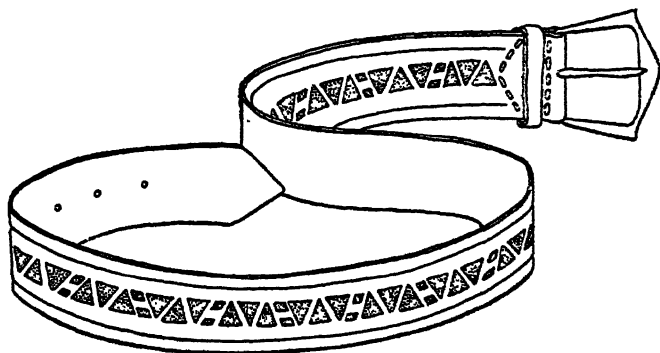


PLATE XL

To make up the belt, first cut a strip of the leather for a loop about three-eighths of an inch wide and long enough to go loosely around the belt. Punch holes in both ends of this strip and tie the ends together, but without overlapping them, by a piece of stout string passed through the holes. Cut a hole in the middle of the width of the belt large enough for the pin of the buckle to pass through easily. Punch six, eight, or any

even number of holes perpendicularly across the belt, close up to where the back of the buckle will come and the same number of exactly corresponding holes in the end which is to be folded back. Make similar perpendicular rows of holes a little more than the width of the loop away from the first rows. Point off the folded end and make holes both along the two sides of the point and similar holes through the top surface of the belt. Insert the buckle and lace through the first perpendicular rows of holes. Then slip the loop in place with the back of the loop between the front surface of the belt and the end which is folded in. Make the second row of lacing through the perpendicular holes on the further side of the loop and carry the lacing around the pointed end.

Punch holes and insert eyelets, if desired, in the other end of the belt.

* * * *

Small Trinket Box

(See Plate *XLI*)

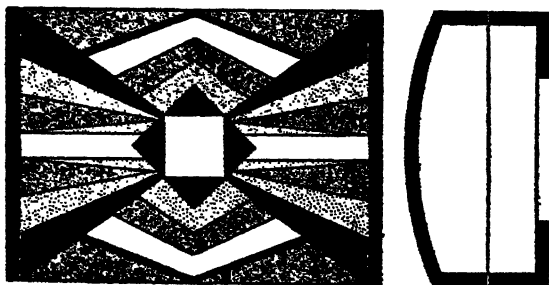


PLATE *XLI*

The illustration on Plate *xxxvi* shows a small wooden box with rounded top, suitable for trinkets, cards, or

other articles, which may be covered with suede, firm skiver, or goatskin.

If the box is to be given any inside finish—staining, varnishing, or lining—it should be applied first.

The paper pattern for cutting the leather should be made in three sections to fit the box exactly: one section to cover the back, top, and front of the box, and two similar sections for the two ends.

The design is transferred to the leather and, if goatskin is used, the outline may be flat-tooled. Apply colors as directed in Chapter IX. The box illustrated was covered with goatskin and colored black, green, brown, and yellow. The yellow should not be too prominent. A similar color effect could be used on skiver or suede, but, as has been previously stated, dyes and stains on suede are liable to fade.

Before applying the leather to the box, close the box tight by winding a string around it from front to back, but not over the sides. Spread the sides of the box with paste, leaving it for a few minutes, as the wood will absorb some of the paste. Then add a little more paste where spots look dry, but be careful not to have any part too wet, or the leather will be spotted. Press the leather side pieces on very carefully, taking special pains not to stretch the leather. Keep a clean, soft cloth at hand to wipe off any excess paste immediately. Leave the box with the leather ends pasted on over night, or at least until you are sure that the paste is thoroughly dry. Then trim off any ends of leather that may have stretched beyond the edges of the box in putting it on. Insert a razor blade in the leather where the lid meets the box and cut the box open on both sides. Remove the string with which the box was tied together.

Using either your paper pattern or the other leather section placed over the front, top, and back of the box, find the exact places for the hinges and make small slits in the leather to correspond.

Spread paste on the front, top, and back of the box, observing the cautions already given against using too much. Keep the box closed and apply the leather covering by beginning at the back, pressing it very smoothly, taking care that the slits come just where the hinges are and that the design is in its proper position on the top, then continue down the front until you have the leather all pressed on very firmly and smoothly. If goatskin has been used and the design was flat-tooled, the outlines should now be gone over with the modelling tool again while the leather is still damp. Then wrap a strip of cloth tightly around the box to keep the cover in place and to prevent the wood from warping. When the work is absolutely dry, trim off any uneven edges and cut the front of the box open with a razor blade, as previously directed for the sides.

For a box covered with suede, no finish is required; for goatskin, polish with banana oil or wax polish after the box is thoroughly dry.

* * * *

Flat Box

(See Plate XLII)

The illustrations show how a wooden box with a flat, unrimmed lid may be made into a very beautiful article when covered with thin calf, decorated with the design suggested and either left uncolored or stained in any shade desired.

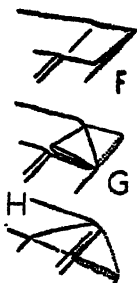
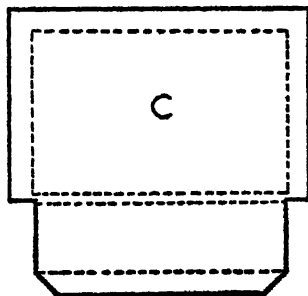
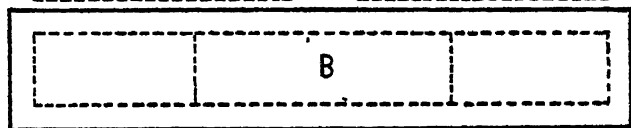
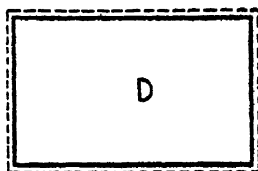
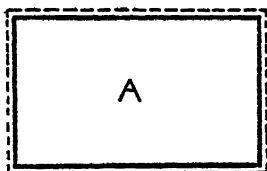
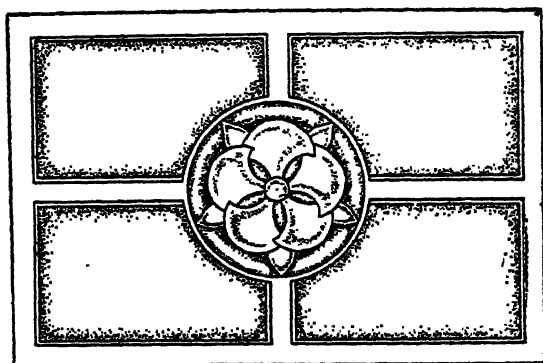


PLATE XLII

Paper patterns for cutting the leather should first be made according to the working drawings shown: Figure B is the long strip to cover the front and two sides; Figure C shows the covering for the lid and back. In both these pieces, the broken lines indicate the dimensions of the box and the narrow margins outside the broken lines, about three-fourths of an inch wide, are to be allowed in the cutting patterns and are to be folded over the edges of the box or the lid. Figure A shows the covering for the bottom of the box. The outside broken lines represent the dimensions of the box; the bottom covering, represented by the inner lines, is cut about one-fourth inch smaller all around than the bottom of the box. Figure D represents the lining for the lid. If the box itself is to be lined with skiver or silk, it will be best to make the lining of the lid from the same lining material, or it may be cut from the covering leather, if desired. The lid lining is to be cut about one-fourth inch smaller all around than the dimensions of the lid. Figure E is a straight piece of leather of the same length as the box and is to be used as a hinge. Figures F, G, and H show the method of folding the leather over at the front corners of the lid.

After the sections of the leather have been cut out to correspond with the paper patterns, draw the margin lines on the inside of the leather and skive off the margins which are to be folded over. Then transfer the design to the top section and flat-tool it. It may also be slightly embossed, if desired, but any embossing must be done very carefully to avoid stretching the thin calf out of shape. Colors may be applied according to the directions in Chapter IX. Any color used in two tones, the background darker than the design, would be effective.

If the box has hinges, they should be removed before you start to paste the leather on the box. They may be put back later, or the leather hinge may be substituted. If the inside of the box is to be stained or lined, this should be left until after the box is covered.

Spread paste or glue on the front and sides and around the same three edges of the bottom of the box and let it stand for a few minutes. If the wood is found to have absorbed the paste in spots, apply more paste. The calfskin will require the use of more paste than was used for the suede or goatskin in the preceding box, as the leather will need to absorb some of the paste to soften it so that it will bend easily.

Apply the leather on the front and sides, turning the margins neatly over the edges of the top and bottom of the box and fold the back margins over the back. Keep pressing the leather on as you work, especially along the edges, which should be made sharp and firm. When the front and sides are dry, spread the lid and back with paste and apply the leather very carefully. Cover the lid first and turn in the corners of the margin as shown in Figures F, G, H. Place the lid on the box, holding it in position by tying a string around the box from side to side, but do not fit the lid on too tight as there should be a little play for the hinge at the back. Then paste the leather on the back and fold the margin under the bottom.

While the leather is still damp with the paste, go over with the modelling tool any lines of the design which may need retouching, but work cautiously so as not to stretch the leather.

When the lid and back are dry, insert the strip of leather for the hinge, carrying it well over the back edge

of the box to meet the leather of the back and then onto the lid. Then apply the lining of the lid and the lining of the box. If metal hinges are preferred, omit the leather hinge and make the lining of the inside back of the box large enough to go over the edge of the back to meet the leather covering and then onto the under part of the lid to meet the lining of the lid. It would, in fact, be best to have the lining of the lid in one piece with the lining of the inside back of the box. When the lining is dry, make slits, if necessary, in the lining and leather covering for the hinges and put the hinges in place.

When the box is completed, it should be polished with wax, which both gives an attractive finish and helps to preserve the leather.

Heavy steerhide can be used for a flat box without any foundation. The sections should all be cut to the dimensions desired without any margin. The box is formed by lacing the edges together. The lid should be laced on the front and sides for a finish and at the back it should be laced to the box with cross-stitching or buttonhole-lacing for a hinge.

